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AUTUMN

I am longing for the country in these peaceful autumn days;
The bees are in the buckwheat and the hills are blue with haze;
The shocks of corn like tepees in the peaceful distance stand,
And a silence that is restful lies upon the fruitful land.

I am yearning for the country, where the maple leaves are red,
Where the hickory nuts are dropping from the branches overhead;
The cows are ruminating, having ceased to hunt the shade;
Here and there a hen is cackling o'er an egg that she has laid.

I am sighing for the country, where the autumn breeze is mild,
Where the partridges are flitting and the lambs are running wild;
Where the turkey cock is strutting, with a challenge in his eye,
Where the apple butter bubbles and the smoke curls to the sky.

Ruth Merton's Faith

Or, Love Finds a Way :: By Florry J. Barrington

"Oh, Arnold, don't be so cruel!"

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CHAPTER I.

HE IS a selfish old spendthrift," declared Edith Forester, drying her eyes with a dainty cambric and lace affair.

Arnold Royston, a tall, clean-cut, good-looking fellow, gazed at the girl in pained surprise.

"If you meant that, Edith," he said, in hurt tones, "it would be cruelly unjust to my father. He is neither selfish nor extravagant."

"Isn't it selfishness to keep you dangling around him all these years instead of putting you in the way of making money?"

The young man smiled sadly.

"It's not so many years," he said. "I'm only twenty-four, and I shall start in something at once."

"And then," continued the girl, "to become insolvent just when you wanted to get married. There's injustice." And angry tears filled her eyes once more.

"Hush, dear. You will make your head ache," Royston said gently. "My father feels much worse than we do over this unfortunate loss. It has made him very ill. In fact, I'm not sure that he will survive the shock."

Edith Forester heard neither the hurt tone nor the tremble in his voice.

"I don't see what right he had to squander your inheritance," she complained. "Of course, I don't want him to die, but if he must, why didn't he die before that last investment?"

The young man looked at the girl in shocked disapproval.

"I had no inheritance," he said quietly.

"But you would have had," insisted the girl, "if your father had died before he wasted it all."

"But it was his while he lived to do with as he pleased," explained Royston. "He made it himself, and he had a perfect right to spend it. He has always been more than generous to me. The last unfortunate speculation was to make more money for me—for us."

His voice was full of tenderness, but Edith did not hear it. When he bent over to take her hand she drew it impatiently away.

Arnold Royston surveyed the girl in silence. Was this the tender, unselfish girl he had wooed and won, who, only for this unexpected failure of his father's affairs, would have been his wife in three months? Yet he thought he understood how disappointing it must be for a girl to make plans for an elaborate wedding and then have to postpone it, hence he made due allowance.

His father had many influential friends, and he was sure of getting in the way of making a fairly good living; not, of course, anything like what he had been accustomed to. With Edith as an incentive, Arnold Royston felt that he would work hard and overcome mountains of difficulties. In ten years, if he had luck, he might be as rich as his father had been, and it would all be for her.

When he tried to explain all this to his fiancee, she refused to discuss the subject, shrugging her shoulders disdainfully. Was it possible her love had gone with his father's money? He had heard of such things. Who has not? But the girls in those instances were totally different from his Edith. In spite of his faith in his betrothed there was a cold chill at his heart. Suppose Edith had only cared for the money and position he expected to give her. He tried to dismiss the thought as unworthy, yet a desire to know his fate seized him.

Edith had turned her back to him and sat moodily staring out of the window. The girl was lovely in the extreme. Hers was the rich, Oriental type of beauty, with eyes of fathomless depths, inclosing wells of love or hate. Her father died when Edith was ten years old, leaving a small legacy to his wife and child. The sum was so small it seemed merely a pittance.

Mrs. Forester used it to good advantage, however. She educated her daughter, and instilled in her mind the true value of wealth, telling her, at the same time, that like the milkmaid, her face was her fortune. Edith was an apt pupil, and from an early age had made up her mind to marry well. Six months before the story opens she had met Arnold Royston at a small gathering in a mountain village, where every one is more or less equal. The young man promptly fell in love with her. The information soon reached her that her admirer's father was a reputed millionaire. An engagement followed. Good old John Royston had never refused his son anything, and consented to the match. To make more money for the boy and his wife, he plunged madly into the last speculation, which brought ruin on his honest old head.

Edith made no attempt to break the silence which had fallen between them. Arnold leaned over her chair.

"Edith, dear," he said earnestly, "don't be angry. At most we shall only have to postpone our marriage for six months. By that time I shall be thoroughly established somewhere, and we will have one of those lovely little apartments on Central Park West. It will be so restful to come home after a hard day's work to find my dear little wife's smiling face to greet me."

Fortunately Arnold did not see the expression on Edith's face. He noticed though, the coldness in her voice, when she said:

"And your house on Riverside drive?"

"My father's home," he corrected, "will be sold, with all the other real and personal property, to satisfy his creditors."

She turned her eyes full upon him now, and there was no mistaking the meaning of her words.

"Have you no claims on them?" she asked. "Is there no way by which you can keep them? Have you no rights. Can't you say they are yours? Ask your father to transfer them to you."

Arnold gazed at the girl in astonishment. "They are no longer his to dispose of," he said emphatically.

"Oh, dear," she cried impatiently, "how do you expect to be a successful business man? Now, isn't there some way of selling the things and signing the bill of sale, or whatever you call the thing, several months or years back?"

Arnold looked bewildered. Where had the girl got such shocking principles.

"There is such a way," he replied coldly, "but it is a dishonest one. If I legally and rightfully owned those things I would sell them all just as my father is going to do, to pay his honest debts."

Edith shed offended tears.

"Don't cry, dear," Arnold said more tenderly. "How should you know anything about business?"

"Oh, you are impossible!" she said, in vexed tones. "Do go away. You have worried me into a headache."

She refused to speak another word, and Arnold left her.

That evening he received a letter from her. He read:

"Dear Arnold:—Though I love you more than any one else in this world, I cannot live in an apartment. I will give you six months to make a home for me as good as the one you offered me two months ago. I don't think that an unreasonable request, if you love me. Until the time expires, mother thinks we had better not meet. I shall be very true to you, and love you all the time, as I know you will love me. EDITH."

Arnold looked at the note, turned it over and over, then read it again. Knowing how impossible it was for him to comply with her terms, he tore up the letter in a hundred pieces and threw it into the waste basket. Arnold had awakened from his dream, a sadder but a wiser man.

CHAPTER II.

AUSTIN BEVERLY, benign of countenance and snow-white of hair, laid down the last of his pile of letters and sat thoughtfully gazing into the pigeonholes of his desk. Suddenly he touched an electric button at his side.

"Tell Mr. Royston I wish to see him," he said to the office boy answering his ring.

The boy disappeared, and two minutes later Arnold Royston entered the room. He was the same good-looking, clean-cut young fellow of two years before. His heavy brown hair and mild brown eyes gave almost a feminine softness to his face, but the firm lines about his mouth showed that he might be trusted thoroughly, though never trifled with.

He took the vacant seat opposite his employer.

"I'm sorry, Arnold," said the lawyer, going right to the point at once, "to see that you don't care for law and are getting more restless every day."

Arnold looked up quickly. "I hope you don't think I am ungrateful," he began.

Mr. Beverly interrupted him. "That's all right, my boy," he said kindly. "It doesn't follow because an old fogy gets tired and looks around for a likely young man to drop his responsibilities on, the first one would fill the bill. No, no, my boy, there are no hard feelings whatever. I've been trying for some time to think how I can help you out."

The young man's face flushed, and he shifted uneasily in his seat.

"I am aready abashed at your generosity," he replied. "You took me into your office when my father died, and for two years have been paying me a salary twice as much as I'm worth, or what you would pay any one else who could adequately fill the position—besides the thousand and one kindnesses you've shown me."

The old lawyer looked earnestly at the son of his friend.

"Tut, tut, boy. I could never do for you what your father and grandfather did for me. I confess I had set my heart on your succeeding me in the law business. It isn't going to prevent me, though, from keeping my word to your father to stand by you during the few years I have left."

Arnold made no effort to conceal his feelings at the mention of his father.

"I have been in communication for some time," continued Mr. Beverly, "with a bank president, a schoolmate of mine and an old friend of your mother; Judge Northrop, the attorney for the bank, is also a former business associate who knew your father well. Now, my boy, I want you to meet the president, Mr. Merton, as soon as possible."

Arnold started, but hastily concealed his confusion, as Mr. Beverly asked whether he knew the wealthy president, or if he had heard his mother mention him. Arnold answered each question in the negative. To himself he murmured:

"Merton, Merton. Impossible! It must be a coincidence. It's a common name."

He caught his employer's eyes fixed steadily on him and started perceptibly.

"What do you wish me to do?" he asked respectfully.

"I want you to make a good impression on Mr. Merton. That won't be difficult," he smiled benignly. "And I think he will make a place for you where there will be sure advancement. He has invited us to dinner on Thursday night. This is Monday. Don't forget the date."

He grasped the young man's hand and slapped him affectionately on the shoulder.

"How can I thank you?" Arnold said.

Before Mr. Beverly could reply a visitor was announced, and the young man prepared to take his leave.

With a parting handclasp the old lawyer said in lowered tones:

"Make good, my boy, make good! Like myself, Mr. Merton is an old man, and has no son."

Arnold had not heard the name of the visitor announced, but at the door he came face to face with the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, the sight of her sending a thrill to his heart such as he had never expected to experience again.

For a second their eyes met. Hers were frank and friendly, his full of respectful admiration. She passed into Mr. Beverly's room and the door was closed. That was all that Arnold saw of the lovely vision. For a long time he pondered on his employer's visitor. Who was she? What had brought her there? And would she come again? were questions he asked himself. Had she been less young or less beautiful, he would have questioned the boy who took her name, but Arnold was above displaying rude curiosity.

Two years before Arnold had known everybody, but since his father's death and the loss of his position in the money world, the young man had held aloof from society. His old friends, however, still sent him invitations, and it was his own fault if he did not go everywhere.

This child, whose face haunted him, the young man felt sure had been in the schoolroom two years ago. He determined henceforth to go around to every one of his friends until he met her.

Arnold could not get his mind back to the duties his visit to Mr. Beverly's room had interrupted. He walked over to the window which looked on to the street. His glance fell on a waiting automobile

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at the door. Instinctively he knew that the perfectly equipped car was hers, though there were scores of other offices in the building where the owner might be calling.

Sitting in the machine was a person whom Arnold had no difficulty in placing as a companion to the girl in the next room. On her lap was a fluffy little Pomeranian. There was nothing about either to indicate who its owner was. The automobile was no different from dozens of other high-class machines. He was still wondering about Mr. Beverly's fair client when he was called to the telephone. When he returned to his post at the window the big touring car had disappeared. Turning away disappointedly he sat down at his desk; but he could not concentrate.

"Oh, pshaw!" he muttered, "and I thought that a woman's face would never disturb me again!"

He got up and paced the floor. "She's as fair as a lily," he murmured rapturously, "and sweeter and lovelier than a rose. I must find out who she is."

CHAPTER III.

ARNOLD ROYSTON found it was more than a mere coincidence of names, when a few days later he, in company with Mr. Beverly, dined at the palatial residence of Philip Merton. Instantly he recognized in the young wife of the elderly president his old fiancee, Edith Forester.

Arnold had not read the account of her marriage, but two months after their parting he had been told of the accidental meeting between the beautiful Edith and the wealthy Mr. Merton, of the four weeks' engagement, and the extravagant wedding which followed. His informant had failed to mention that Mr. Merton was a banker. Hence, though the name had set him thinking, Arnold was quite unprepared for the meeting.

More beautiful than ever, she descended upon him like some exquisite moth.

"Oh, it's so good and dear of you to come and see me this way!" she murmured softly. "I have been looking for you to find an opportunity. But why have you kept me waiting so long? Of course no one suspects, or need ever know that we are old friends—and it's going to be glorious. I am so happy."

Arnold stood transfixed, his startled eyes seeing nothing of her loveliness. Her words rushed headlong upon his consciousness and overwhelmed him. He raised his hand in protest.

"Hush, Edith——"

"Ah, dear!" she sighed. "He calls me Edith. At first, Arnold, I thought from the look in your eyes you had ceased to care for me."

Arnold wanted to flee from her presence, so great were the shock and revulsion of feeling, so intense was the scorn he felt at the disloyalty. Had he been there under any other circumstances than a dinner guest he would have done so.

"If I called you by your first name it was only because——"

"It was because you love me, Arnold—as you did love me."

"It is because men use the shortest, most familiar terms when thrown off their guard. Take care; I do not love you so insanely as I did before you sold yourself for money. I wouldn't encourage you in unfaithfulness to the honorable man who is your husband, or dishonor myself in my treatment of my host's wife."

The words sounded ungallant, even brutal, but Arnold remembered her levity of principles, and knew that only the firmest attitude would avail with her. How vividly he recalled their last interview and the note which followed. How keenly her words had stung him. And though she had vowed she loved him, and would be true to him, inside of a month she was married to some one else.

Edith motioned to a balcony at the end of the receptionroom, and Arnold in deadly fear lest some foolish word from his hostess might be overheard, followed. In the shadow of a large palm she stretched out her hand imploringly.

"Oh Arnold," she sobbed emotionally, "don't be so cruel! If you only knew what I have suffered—how I suffer every day. Oh, God, can't you imagine what purgatory it is to be married to that doting idiot, when I'm thinking of you by day, and dreaming of you by night? Arnold, Arnold, don't close my heaven—our heaven; for in spite of your sternness you love me."

Arnold's face was white, pitilessly white in the dark and misty shadows that framed it.

"Stop," he said austerely, "I will not listen to another word. You are beside yourself and will regret these foolish words. If I could find some reasonable excuse to leave this house at once, I would do so. I must stay to dinner, but I will never annoy you again. Try, Mrs. Merton, to forget this interview, as I shall."

The narrow veranda upon which they stood extended to the smokingroom. Neither had seen Mr. Beverly standing behind a huge potted evergreen at the far end. The guileless man had heard everything that the perfidious wife of his old friend had uttered.

After the couple had returned to the receptionroom the old man stood as though stricken with palsy.

"So young, so beautiful, and yet so false!" he murmured. "Poor Philip."

He remained outside until everybody had started toward the diningroom. Then he slowly followed. No one except Philip Merton noticed any change in the old lawyer.

When Arnold emerged from the veranda to join the other guests in the drawingroom, the dark look in his eyes, the pale cheek, and firm lines about his mouth showed unmistakably that he was prepared for a very disagreeable evening. Imagine then his surprise when his hostess smilingly—for it was a part of her policy not to be offended—introduced him to Mr. Merton's daughter, Ruth. If he could trust his eyes, there was Mr. Beverly's beautiful client looking more beautiful, if possible, than before.

No ragtag and bobtail society ever forged its way into Mr. Merton's house, and Ruth knew that in offering a friendly welcome to the handsome young stranger she was receiving her father's friend. Though she had never seen him before, she knew he was no casual acquaintance.

Arnold was delighted at her charming reception of him and transported to the seventh heaven when he learned that he was to take her in to dinner. He wondered whether she received every strange young man with that delicious frankness. Under the spell of her sprightly chat and soft, musical laugh the color returned to his cheeks, the light to his eyes, and the hard lines about his mouth softened. Edith Merton, from her end of the table, saw with jealous eyes the old care free Arnold of two years ago.

Mr. Beverly was silent and abstracted during the meal. From time to time he would furtively watch the banker, but he could detect nothing. Mr. Merton was complacently happy, and clearly proud of his beautiful wife.

The lawyer was sitting next to his hostess, and she rallied him for his inattention. While doing so she tapped him lightly on the arm with the tip of her fingers. The honest old man recoiled from the contact. Edith noticed the movement and flushed. Fortunately she had perfect control of her temper.

"Ah," she said sweetly, "you lawyers hear so many shocking confessions and other disagreeable things, I suppose you are forever weighted down with the burden of it all?"

"My profession," he replied slowly, "doesn't compel me to listen to disagreeable revelations. If it did, I hope it wouldn't make me so hardened in mind and conscience that I could be disloyal to my nearest and dearest."

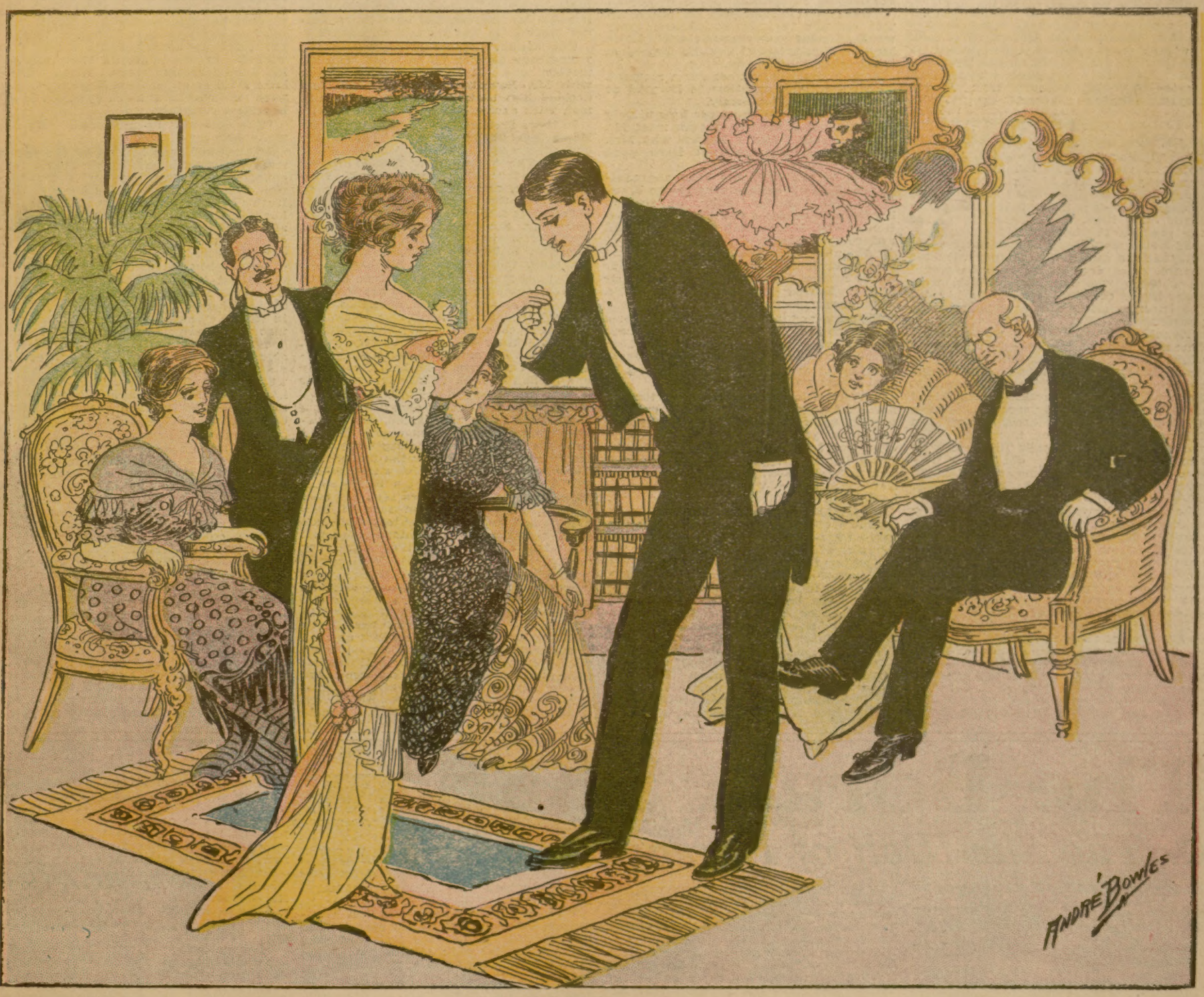
For a second their eyes met, and hers fell beneath the penetrating gaze of the lawyer.

"Nothing, I am sure," she replied, rising from the table, "would make you forget the exact conformity to truth, or to the rules prescribed for moral conduct."

Mr. Beverly caught the sarcasm. As he held the door open for her to pass out, he said low enough for only herself to hear:

"Nor make me falter in the interest of my friends, if I am sure their honor is in jeopardy."

When he returned to his seat Mr. Merton and Arnold were in earnest conver-



"Oh, it's so good and dear of you to come!"

sation. Later, as the two old friends parted, Mr. Merton said:

"Beverly, I like young Royston very much. He reminds me wonderfully of his mother. I would like to advance him as much as possible. And by the way, I want you to come to the bank tomorrow morning. I am going to make a new will."

The lawyer looked at his old friend quickly. Did he suspect something wrong? Mr. Merton's face was serene, and he laughed at his friend's surprise.

"Will you come?" he asked.

"Gladly," replied the other. "I've been hoping for a long time that you would change your mind, Philip, and do better by Ruth."

"Who's talking about me?" said a bright voice.

The two old men started violently to find pretty Ruth Merton close behind them. She was easily satisfied with their explanation, that they were settling her accounts, for she had been chatting with Arnold Royston and had heard only her name as she came up.

Edith Merton stood at the far end of the room where she kept a jealous eye on her young stepdaughter. The look she cast on the innocent girl boded no good for the future. In all her life there had been only one person whom Edith Merton had loved more than Arnold Royston—that was herself.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE evening in company with Ruth had completely changed Arnold's point of view. He no longer desired to run away from Mrs. Merton. On the contrary, he would have liked to go to her house every day, if he could have seen Ruth each time. He wanted to accept the position the banker had offered.

If Edith would only forget their early infatuations and not interefere with his future, some day before long he would be able to woo the lovely Ruth, with some hopes of winning her. So big did the bank president's offer appear to the young man.

Arnold's pleasant vision was of short duration. Before he went to sleep that night he decided to explain as best he could to Mr. Beverly why he was unable to accept his new friend's generosity. Fancying that he knew his young friend not a little, Mr. Beverly would have been disappointed had not Arnold sought an interview the following morning. With the words of his friend's faithless wife ringing in his ears, the old lawyer listened patiently to the lame excuse Arnold advanced for declining Mr. Merton's offer.

When the young man concluded by asking his employer to retain him in his services, it was temptation for the old man to follow the line of least resistance. The rectitude of his life did not desert him, though. He felt responsible for the young man's future, and he was not going to let the vanity of a misguided woman interfere.

He advised Arnold to take the position, or give a good reason for refusing it. He knew the boy was a chip of the old block, and would never betray a woman—even a worthless one! but he had an old man's fancy to put a younger one to the test.

"You are satisfied with the liberality of the offer?" he asked the young man.

Arnold flushed a dark red under the quizzing glance.

"In my wildest dreams I never saw visions of such munificence," he replied.

"And the banking profession appeals to you," went on the lawyer. "And if you had met Mr. Merton at the bank instead of at the house, you would have gratefully accepted the offer?"

Arnold felt he could be truthful without committing himself.

"Assuredly, I should," he replied.

"Then, my boy," said the lawyer, earnestly, "tell me why you refuse."

"I cannot," he answered.

"Tell me as a client to his legal adviser," suggested Mr. Beverly.

Arnold shook his head regretfully.

"As son and father," urged the older man.

Still Arnold was immovable.

"As sinner and confessor," importuned the tormentor, trying to conceal a smile.

But the young man was adamant.

Mr. Beverly got up and slapped Arnold heartily on the shoulder.

"Well, you needn't tell," he said. "I was on the veranda and heard every word of your conversation with Edith Merton. I'm proud of you, my boy—just downright proud of you."

Arnold could only stare for a moment. He hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry. His jaw set firmly.

"In that case you must see how utterly impossible it is for me to even meet Mr. Merton again. Had I known who Mrs. Merton was, I would not have gone there."

Then he explained his brief acquaintance and hasty engagement to the beautiful Edith Forester. When he came to his father's reverses and the girl's rejection of him, Mr. Beverly nodded his head understandingly.

"Ah, ah!" he muttered. "I never yet was at fault in character reading. Your words confirm my worst suspicions. Poor Philip! Doting old idiot! Ah, well, Mrs. Merton, we shall see."

He remained in profound thought for a few moments. Arnold felt that the conference was over, and was about to withdraw when Mr. Beverly suddenly looked up. It was a keen glance that he shot at his young friend.

"Arnold," he said firmly, "by the affection I have for you and my promise to your dying father to look after you, I command you to accept Mr. Merton's offer and leave the explanations to me. I'm going to see him this morning, and will tell him what I consider necessary. Not another word," sternly. "I mean to be obeyed."

Had there been no Ruth Merton, Arnold would have remained firm, but a wave of relief swept over him as he thought of the golden opportunity for seeing her that lay open before him. He was far too modest to believe that Edith Merton really cared for him, or that she would come between him and any one that he cared for. He thanked his employer, and promised to be guided by him in everything concerning his new position.

Mr. Beverly then hurried off to keep an appointment with the banker. For three hours the two old men were closeted in Mr. Merton's private office at the bank. It was late in the afternoon when the lawyer returned to his own office. He looked tired and thoughtful, but thoroughly satisfied.

"It's all right, Arnold," he said, meeting the young man's anxious glance. "You will see Mr. Merton at the bank tomorrow morning. I don't think you will ever be called upon to refer to the disagreeable subject of the dinner again."

Arnold thanked the kindly old man again and again.

"Surely," he thought, as he left the office for the last time, "her woman's pride will prevent her from showing by word or look that she is even interested."

But Arnold was to learn in the near future how interested a jealous and slighted woman can be.

CHAPTER V.

DURING the first weeks of initiation into his new duties, Arnold was deeply touched by the old banker's kindness, and embarrassed by so much consideration from an older man to a younger one. He believed that it arose from recollection of his mother, for whom, he learned, Mr. Merton had once felt a tender regard. It was true, in a measure.

The banker became interested in the young man as soon as he heard who his mother was. It was the conversation with Mr. Beverly, however, which had decided him that Royston was a young man with exceptional moral qualities.

In these first weeks Arnold seldom saw Edith Merton, but the banker's pretty daughter was a frequent visitor to the bank. The young man found himself watching feverishly for her bright, winning smile, and was just beginning to think that the dainty Ruth was not indifferent to him, when, like a bolt from a clear sky, came the crushing news that Mr. Merton intended his lovely young daughter to become the wife of Richard Manning, the cashier of the bank.

Richard Manning was the type of man who command respect but never affection. Solid and somber describes him. He had entered the bank as a clerk, and in seven years had crept past men who had held their posts for twenty years. At present he was so close to the president it would have gone badly with any one foolish enough to interfere with his plans.

After the first shock experienced from the sudden news had passed, Arnold became more puzzled than ever. He had come to know every fleeting expression that danced merrily over the features of the vivacious Ruth. He was positive that the girl not only did not love Manning, but that she disliked him. In fact, he believed she stood in fear of him. Arnold had seen the brightest smile die on her lips at the cashier's approach and a look almost of alarm come into her eyes.

At the time that these things were troubling the young man more than he cared to admit, he came suddenly one day on Manning and Edith Merton in earnest conversation. The president's wife had come alone to the bank, and the two were seated in the cashier's private office. Something in their attitude, or their manner, or both, confused the young man. They were talking in whispers.

Manning started impatiently; Arnold fancied with an unusual show of feeling for the generally cool, even cashier. Edith Merton kept her eyes down, as she always did in the young man's presence. Arnold apologized for the intrusion—said that his business was unimportant, and he would return later.

That same afternoon, after her stepmother had gone, Ruth Merton called at the bank. She looked quieter than usual, and smiled gravely at Arnold as she passed him on her way to Manning's office. The moments she stayed there were like hours to the anxious watcher, who kept his eyes riveted on the door.

"What does it all mean?" he asked himself over and over again. "Surely she could marry whom she pleases. Her father is rich enough to indulge any whim. He is devoted to his only child."

Not for a second would Arnold allow himself to believe that the sprightly little Ruth would from choice marry a heavy, sullen fellow like Manning.

Making allowance for his jealousy the young man came to the conclusion that the cashier was cold, cruel, and unscrupulous. He wondered if Edith Merton and Manning were in league to compel Ruth to marry against her own wishes. In the moments that followed his doubts became fears. When a little later Ruth emerged from Manning's office with pale cheeks and red eyes, his dread became a certainty.

"The coward!" he muttered. "He has made her cry."

If Ruth had been looking at the young man, she would have seen on his face concern, sympathy, love and determination to help her in spite of herself. But Ruth's eyes were downcast. He saw that her lips were quivering and that she was afraid to trust herself to speak. The incident upset all Arnold's work for that day. He could think of nothing else than of how to be of service to Ruth.

At first he thought of going to Mr. Beverly. But he could hardly do that without betraying his more than interest in Ruth. The old lawyer might think he was presumptuous. At any rate he felt some hesitancy in telling a second love story to the same man. The lawyer was old-fashioned and might think that he was fickle. Not for worlds would he have any one misunderstand the tender regard that of late had become his very existence.

So he decided to work it out alone. But how? Arnold had never received another invitation to Mr. Merton's home, but he had met Ruth at several houses, and he was overjoyed to find that she did not avoid him. On the contrary, she was pleased to see him and made no secret of the fact. He had an invitation to a reception on the following evening and felt sure the Mertons would be there. Arnold decided to go and approach the girl in a way she could not resent.

"So Mr. Richard Manning," mused our hero, "in the future——

" 'They shall take who have the power,
And they shall keep who can.' "

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

The Borgia Shadow

Or, *The She-Wolf of Florence* By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER IX.

ANDREA'S DEFIANCE.

WHEN Francesca took the cold, dripping form of Momo, the page, in her arms, she bent over it and imprinted a kiss upon the pallid brow. The rough boatman stood and stared that one of such rank should bestow attentions on a little menial who still wore the badge of his servility. But Francesca thought only of the encounter in the Arno gardens, when Momo saved her from the machinations of the Black Cardinal.

"Give him to me," she said, looking at the silent man. "I will see that the boy has the burial he deserves."

"But what is this?" cried Andrea, tearing aside Momo's doublet and pointing to a dark stain on his breast. "He has been done to death, the villains!" and he laid his hand on the hilt of his sword. "The doer of this deed shall pay the penalty. I swear it on the good blade I wear!"

The pleasure boat put back, and Francesca bore the dead boy to her own sumptuous apartments and made the little form ready for the tomb. On the way she recounted her adventure in the gardens, and told how Sancia had doubtless gone hither for her destruction, and how Momo, in his boyish love-making, had frustrated his evil designs.

Andrea's face darkened at the recital. He now knew that Catherine Borgia had marked Francesca for a victim of her hatred, and knowing, as well, that she was all-powerful, for a moment his heart was filled with terrible apprehensions. He longed to hold the Black Cardinal at the good point of his rapier, and swore that the time would come when he could do so.

He walked slowly down the street, his mind full of indignation and vengeance, and his heart beat with righteous fury.

He was passing into another thoroughfare, when something whizzed past his head, and he knew that he had narrowly escaped an arrow from an arbalest. Quick as a cat Andrea whirled, and, seeing a fleeing figure, darted after it with naked blade.

"Hold, villain!" he shouted, but his voice seemed only to increase the speed of the one flying before him, but Andrea did not give up.

It was a long chase, and when the fugitive sprang into a certain place, the young Florentine uttered an ejaculation of joy, for he knew he had run his enemy into a veritable cul de sac.

He saw the foe attempt to open a door which would not yield, and when he pounded on the portal, a light appeared in one of the narrow windows overhead and a head was thrust out. By this light Andrea saw the features of Cosmo Borgia, and in his hands was gripped the weapon which had almost terminated his existence.

With the cry of an enraged lion Francesca's lover sprang at his enemy, who had backed against the wall and was glaring at him with all the hatred the human heart is capable of harboring.

"Drop your arbalest and draw your steel," cried Andrea.

Cosmo, frothing over his failure, threw his crossbow to the ground and whipped out his blade.

"I want you on an equality," said the lover. "I should pierce your heart without ceremony, but I give you more than you gave me—a chance for life."

Cosmo seemed unnerved by his situation. In a trice Andrea had his sword at his throat and was pressing him as it were into the wall itself.

"Mercy! mercy!" wailed the cornered wolf.

"What mercy should I show you, scum of Borgia?" was the hissed retort.

"Spare me by the blood of the saints!"

The man's abject cowardice brought a smile to Andrea's lips.

"Tell me first who slew Momo?" he demanded.

"Not I, messire."

"No? Was it the hand of Catherine?"

"How should I know?"

"You are her mouthpiece and slave," was the rejoinder. "If I spare you I must ever be on my guard."

"Mercy! mercy!"

Andrea was eager to sheathe his blade in the bosom of the wretch, but yet he forebore.

"I spare you, reptile," cried he, drawing back, and saw the hunchback breathe again. "The next time—— Why should I slit a dog's weazen?" and then, with one more look at the cowering man, he turned on his heel and retraced his steps.

Time was to come when he would repent of his leniency, but he could not slay a man whose hand was palsied with fear, even though that man was a Borgia.

On his way back he dropped into the "Golden Lizard," and was stared at by its occupants.

"Where is your little trouvere, messire?" cried half a dozen revelers at sight of him.

"I have him not with me tonight," answered Andrea, and then he espied a dark face above one of the tables.

Without another word he crossed the floor and took a seat opposite the fellow.

"Good night, Messire Sancia," he said, in tones of mock courtesy.

The Black Cardinal slightly dropped his head.

"It was a pretty drama you intended to play in the Arno gardens," Andrea exclaimed.

"Eh?"

"A pretty play," he went on. "Why did you not carry it through?"

Sancia's face lost color, and his hand moved swiftly to his sword at his side.

"Come," said Andrea, clutching his wrist and gripping it like a steel vise. "Draw your infamous weapon, and I'll part your heart in the middle! Oh, you sneaking rat! The boy, Momo, is to have a better burial than you and your mistress designed for him."

"I, messire?"

"Yea, you. Hell will not welcome its favorite till your soul knocks at its brazen gates. The child, I said, has been rescued from the river, but his little soul had taken its flight through the dagger's slit."

The Black Cardinal was chafing in his fury.

"My mistress——"

"Mention not her name to me!" interrupted Andrea. "The poisoned flowers and your dagger failed, and you can go

and tell the She-Wolf of Florence that, despite her machinations, the beautiful Strozzi will yet become Andrea Urbino's bride."

"This is too much, messire," whipped out Sancia.

"Too much, eh? Take that for interest!" and the hand of Andrea was laid across the Black Cardinal's cheek in no gentle manner.

The wretch grew as white as Vesuvian ashes. Andrea rose to his feet, and, with one last look at the fuming villain, walked away, and, after sipping some of Donnizetta's best, left the place. Almost instantly the Black Cardinal sprang to his feet, and, biting off an oath, darted after him.

Ten minutes later he burst into the private chambers of Catherine Borgia and looked wildly around. He was the sole tenant of the handsome rooms.

"Where is she?" he cried. "Where is my mistress?"

In response to his cry a door opened, and Catherine in beautiful robes swept majestically into the chamber. She stopped short at sight of her tool.

"What has reddened your cheeks, messire?" she exclaimed. "What has happened?"

"We have been insulted, traduced, defied!" roared the Black Cardinal.

"By whom?"

Catherine was wonderfully calm.

"You can count on my arm," cried the Black Cardinal.

"I know, as I can count on my own," was the swift reply.

"He said tonight that despite you, my mistress, the Strozzi would yet become his bride."

Catherine opened a drawer in the table before her and took out a golden egg, a present from Rome, and held it in her open hand before her slave.

"Look!" she exclaimed. "This egg represents my enemies. I crush it thus!" and the golden particles fell in a shower at the Black Cardinal's feet.

CHAPTER X.

A STORMY INTERVIEW.

THE passion that filled the heart of Lucia Camaro for Andrea was uncontrollable. Not satisfied with the repulse she had received at his hands, she resolved to overcome all obstacles and win him yet. Francesca, her beautiful rival, filled her with jealousy, and, walking or sleeping, she saw before her the fair Strozzi whom she now hated with all the evil impulses of her nature. As for Cosmo Borgia, she had never thought of the wretch, save with feelings of loathing, and had she been told that she had been selected to become his bride, her heart would have burst with rage.

When she received a summons to repair to the Borgia palace she read the missive a score of times, as though a mistake had been made. On the scented parchment was her own name, and at the bottom of the letter the well-known signature of Catherine. It was a summons she dared not disobey, and in a short time her equippage stopped in front of the ducal palace and Lucia went up the marble stair.

The liveried menials bowed to her as she was escorted down the aisles, and when she found herself in the august presence of Borgia's wife, she recoiled, for the looks that darted from Catherine's eyes boded her no good. Lucia had arrayed herself in her finest raiment, and looked the beautiful and haughty creature she was. She waited Catherine's commands.

"I have sent for you, Countess," began the Borgia, in modulated tones, "to confer upon you a great honor."

Lucia's cheek changed color, and she breathlessly waited for her to continue.

"The time has come for my nephew, Cosmo, to find a life mate," Catherine went on. "I have looked over all the titled houses in Italy, and in the whole realm I find but one that contains a fitting spouse for my dear relative."

The tinge grew deeper on Lucia's face.

"No doubt the chosen one will be honored by the selection," said she, though her heart was not in her words.

"It cannot be otherwise," replied Catherine. "It is the greatest honor in the world to be united to the House of Borgia."

Silence fell between the pair.

"My dear Countess, I have chosen you to become one of our ducal house. I——"

Lucia uttered a cry which she could not keep back. Her face went as white as the lilies that bloomed in the gold vase on the table.

"I know you will take it as the event of your life," Catherine proceeded, as though she had misread the cheeks of her auditor. "Lord Cosmo has consented to take you for wife."

"Lord Cosmo?" cried Lucia. "Why has his choice fallen upon one so unworthy as myself?"

"Love knows no barriers," rather haughtily responded Catherine. "I approve of my noble nephew's choice, and will give the union my blessing."

"No, I cannot, Princess!" exclaimed Lucia, holding out her hands in pleading gesture. "I cannot become the wife of Lord Cosmo Borgia."

"My will is law!" exclaimed the haughty woman, stamping on the rich carpet with her little foot. "I am Catherine Borgia, Countess."

"I know that."

"When I say that I have chosen you for Lord Cosmo's wife, you will know that the marriage will take place within a reasonable time."

The young Countess recoiled, and for a moment stood like one struck dumb by a sudden blow.

"But you have not consulted my wishes," she went on, when she found her tongue. "You forget, Princess, that already I may have surrendered my heart to another."

"Pish!" cried Catherine. "Those pledges made in the heat of passion are like cobwebs which can be swept away by a breath."

"But not the love of Lucia Camaro."

"Even that love."

The little foot struck the carpet again with more anger than ever.

"From this moment you will consider yourself the fiancee of Lord Cosmo Borgia."

"What if I refuse to obey?" There was a rebellious light in the young Countess' eyes.

"But you will not refuse," broke forth the Borgia. "You will go from this apartment as the chosen bride of my nephew."

"Spare me!" was the answer. "He is not all a man."

"Deformity was not of his choosing," almost thundered Catherine. "I know he is not as handsome as some men, that he came into this world imperfect, but that shall not prevent him from making you the Countess Borgia."

"But my father——"

"Count Camaro will interpose no hand," was the interruption. "He will esteem it an honor to be connected with our noble house."

"You have consulted him?"

"Consultation is unnecessary. I am Catherine Borgia."

Lucia seemed to totter toward the door. Her limbs almost gave way, her heart fluttered like a hopeless bird's, and her figure shook from head to foot.

Suddenly Catherine sprang toward her like a tigress, and, grasping her wrist, dragged her back and almost flung her into the velvet chair.

"Who would rob my nephew of his bride?" she cried, glaring down at her victim. "Who has your love, Countess?"

She looked up into her face as though afraid to speak.

"Have you thrown yourself away upon some untitled roisterer? Is it possible that you would wed beneath you? Out with your secret, Countess."

"He to whom I have given my heart is not unworthy of the gift," Lucia answered. "A Camaro throws not her love away upon a roisterer."

"Tell me, then!" roared the Princess. "Speak the name of this man."

Andrea's name bubbled to Lucia's lips, but she hesitated. She knew the passion and the vengeance of the She-Wolf of Florence. The secret crimes of Catherine were more than hinted at in all classes of society, and it was said that no enemy ever escaped her.

"Tell me! 'Tis your Princess who commands," almost shouted the Borgia. "Open your mouth, if remorse has not struck you dumb, and breathe the name of this heart breaker."

Lucia with a cry leaped to her feet, and her figure seemed to increase in stature.

"If I must, I must!" cried she. "Know, then, that I love Andrea Urbino."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of the terrible Princess, it would not have blanched her cheeks more than did the words of the white-faced Countess. Catherine seemed transformed into a statue of ice. She uttered a sound which to Lucia appeared the cry of a whelp-robbed lioness.

"Andrea Urbino?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Princess."

"And you have given your heart to him?"

"You have just said that love knows no barrier," smiled Lucia.

Catherine paid no heed to the thrust.

"Does he return your love?"

Lucia winced under the words. Her last interview with Andrea came back to her with fourfold force.

"I shall win him for myself," she answered, a moment later. "I am heart and soul his own."

"Never!" was the swift retort. "The

"Know then that I love Andrea Urbino!"

"By the Urbino scum."

"Ha! What is that you say? By the Urbino tongue?"

"By none other, beautiful mistress," replied Sancia.

"Where did he spit his venom?"

"At the 'Golden Lizard.'"

"When?"

"This very night."

"And you took it all?"

"He had me at his mercy. But I followed him and offered combat," which, as the reader knows, was a lie. "There would be a dog's blood on my blade if he had accepted."

A tinge of white rage mantled Catherine's cheeks.

"They've found the boy?" continued Sancia, dropping his voice to the edge of a whisper.

"Momo?"

"Aye, mistress. He threw the finding into my teeth."

"Whither was he taken?"

"I know not, but I shall find out."

"That is immaterial," responded Catherine. "We have no dealings now with the dead. It is our duty to look after the living."

"Truer words were never spoken," said Sancia.

Catherine took a turn about the room, watched by her companion, and when she came back to him there was a different expression on her face.

"I never fail to get to the end of my strand," said she, looking down at the waiting rascal. "For Catherine Borgia there is no final failure."

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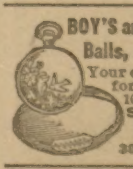

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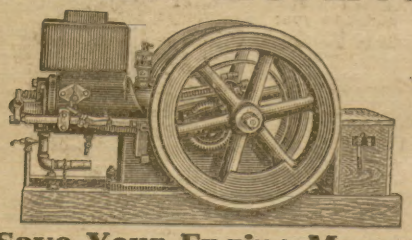

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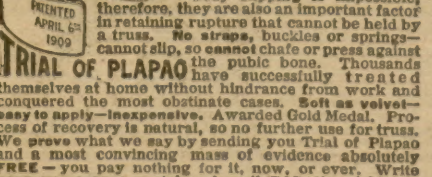

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blood of the Urbino shall never mingle in the veins of a Camaro."

"But, my noble lady——"

"Silence!" flashed Catherine. "When you go from my presence it is as the future Countess Borgia."

"But my heart——"

"To perdition with that false member!" thundered the proud mistress of Florence. "The skein that binds you to this man can be severed with silken shears. It is no trick at all."

"Hear me, Princess——"

"I have listened too long already. When again you enter this palace, it will be as a Borgia."

Lucia was too stunned to speak.

"Now, my future niece, you can go," continued Catherine. "Go and prepare for the nuptials which shall be the most dazzling in Florence. I will superintend them."

The last hope seemed gone. The Countess Lucia seemed on the verge of a swoon. Why beg longer before this terrible woman?

At that moment footsteps came down the corridor beyond the door, and the next instant it swung open. There on the threshold stood Cosmo, his deformity apparently accentuated and his piggish eyes glittering like carbuncles.

"Come in," commanded Catherine, as the hunchback seemed on the eve of retiring.

Lord Cosmo shuffled forward and his eyes fell upon Lucia.

"Your future wife!" cried Catherine, with a sweeping gesture. "I congratulate you, Lord Cosmo."

The hunchback bowed with his plumed hat sweeping the very door. Lucia did not stir.

"She has given her consent——"

"I——"

"She is glad to become the bride of a Borgia," continued Catherine. "The wedding will take place this day a week."

Cosmo, in response to a look from his aunt, stepped forward and held out his hand to the young girl. She touched it not, but sprang to the door crying back from there:

"Were he a golden toad, I would hate him still!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE BARGAIN.

LUCIA'S parting shot at Cosmo's deformity caused a grim smile to spread over his apish features.

"Methinks she will be hard to tame," he observed to his aunt. "Was her consent freely given?"

"Think you so from her Parthian arrow?"

"Meseems she was not in the best of humor."

"And prospective brides should all be happy, eh, my lord?"

"As happy as their nuptials warrant them."

"Well, the Countess Lucia is not the most willing bride I have seen in my time, but what matters it? You can tame her after marriage."

"And tame her I will, if she is to be my mate!" hissed Cosmo.

"She loves another so she says——"

"And, pray, who is he?"

"Your old friend, Andrea Urbino."

The face of the hunchback Borgia went red.

"By heavens! It would be revenge enough to throw her into his clutches, for I hanker not after that sort of wife."

"What! are you going to refuse her?" cried Catherine, stepping toward her nephew.

He seemed to shrink within himself at her glance.

"No," he drawled, "but, as I have told you, there is another upon whom I would sooner bestow the Borgia name."

Catherine took a hasty stride about the room, then, coming back to him:

"This day week, remember," she said, "in this palace," and she waved a dismissal.

The Toad floundered down the great staircase cursing under his breath.

"I will strike hands with the Black Cardinal," said he, growling. "I will make a bargain with him, for by my life! I am no match with the sword with this Urbino. Sancia is an adept with the steel, and if that should fail him——"

He stopped suddenly, for a hand was laid on his arm, and as he fell back and laid his hand on the hilt of his rapier, he looked into the face of the very man whom he had just mentioned.

"This is fortunate!" cried Cosmo, and he pulled the Black Cardinal away, taking him by half-force down the street, nor stopping till he had ushered him into his own chambers.

"When did you lose your senses?" grinned Sancia, as he dropped into a chair and shrugged his shoulders.

"Gods! I've passed through enough lately to lose them ten times over," was the reply.

"Is it a love affair?"

"Partly so, my good Sancia."

"And you go mumbling here and there like a schoolboy, I warrant."

"Or like a raging lion."

"If we are to talk, know ye that you have parched my lips. Where is your Falerian?"

Cosmo betook his misshapen figure across the room, and carried wine and two goblets to the little table. The Black Cardinal unceremoniously helped himself.

"It is this way," said Cosmo, leaning across the board. "I'm going to wed."

"Satyr and Venus, eh?" laughed Sancia, licking his lips over the draught.

"Toad and butterfly," responded Cosmo, in the same strain.

"I must congratulate the lucky damsel. I have long perceived that you have been casting sheep's eyes upon the fair Strozzi, and now that your gracious aunt, Heaven keep her! has relented and sanctioned the union——"

"She sanctions it not!" broke in the Borgia. "I have been affianced to the Countess Camaro."

"Ho! ho! to that fairy," and Sancia fell back in his chair and burst into limitless laughter. "When did you switch from rose to gardenia, Cosmo?"

"When my aunt pulled the strings," grated the hunchback.

"I see."

Cosmo lowered his voice.

"Look ye, Sancia," said he. "If I go to that altar, I go manacled. I hate every drop of blood in Lucia Camaro's veins."

"They are pretty pink veins, by my troth, boy."

"Filled with reptile blood."

"But why have you dragged me hither——to tell me of your approaching marriage?"

"Not exactly. With the Urbino out of the way, and with Lucia in the same situation, don't you see that I can net the Strozzi peafowl?"

"Oh!"

"I am no match for Andrea," continued the hunchback. "He has a sword that can see if he were blind."

"By the saints, I believe you!"

"You like him not?"

"Your words are superfluous," was the answer. "But go on."

"There is no better swordsman in Florence than Sancia Mariano. He hath that reputation."

"Thanks, my lord," and the Black Cardinal took another sip at his wine.

"You know where he is to be found," Cosmo went on. "I need not show you the quarry's trail."

"I'm not blind, boy."

"And two better eyes than yours never glittered in a man's head."

Sancia took the compliment with a bow.

"First the Urbino, next the Countess," whispered Cosmo. "You understand?"

"It's wholesale business, eh?"

"Call it what you will," grinned the hunchback. "When I am love's overlord to the beautiful Francesca, I will highly reward you my friend Sancia."

"With a dukedom?"

"With more than that!" cried The Toad. "Is it a bargain, my friend?"

"It's a bargain!"

Cosmo drew his sword and laid it flat upon the table.

"Your blade on mine and the oath," cried he, and Sancia placed his own rapier atop of Cosmo's and swore to the bargain.

"Now my blood flows freely once more," said the deformed. "My aunt hates the Urbino."

"I know that."

"Good!"

"But she hates the Strozzi, too."

"Ah," said Cosmo. "There are other lands than Italy."

"But the vengeance of Catherine Borgia is far reaching."

"And the feet of love are swift."

The bargain having been made, the two worthies left the room and went down into the street. There they separated with a pressure of kindred hands, and each went his way.

Let us follow the Black Cardinal. He drew his cloak closely about his form, and threaded several streets, till he reached a house into which he let himself.

"A viperess and a fool, and I am serving both!" cried he, throwing his hat upon a couch while he seated himself. "What's this?"

A letter lay before him, and he snatched it up with an ejaculation of surprise. It took him but a moment to break the seal, and then his eyes bulged and an oath leaped from his throat.

"The rascal challenges me!" he cried. "Not satisfied with placing the point of his sword at my throat, he would split my heart. And he proposes the Boboli Gardens tonight at twelve."

The Black Cardinal gnashed his teeth as he again scanned the letter, which was a challenge in the bold hand of Andrea Urbino.

"He shall not go unsatisfied," cried Sancia, leaping to his feet. "At twelve by St. Stefano's dial, is it? So may it be!"

He bustled about the room like a fly on a griddle, now testing his rapier on various objects, and now looking at a coat of delicate mail which he took from his armory. He was satisfied at last, after putting on the secret protector, and his spirits grew calm.

"Let me see," he exclaimed. "A hat full of lys d'or from my mistress and a dukedom from Cosmo. Why, Sancia will soar higher than the best gerfalcon."

Equipped to his satisfaction, he left the house and tripped down the street. It wanted some hours till the meeting in the Boboli Gardens, one of the most beautiful parks in Florence, and Sancia

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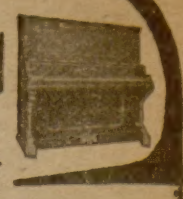

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was in jovial mood. Suddenly he drew up in front of the booth of a street fortune teller, and, drawing his hat over his brows, strode across the threshold.

The seeress, a young girl with dark gypsy-like eyes, looked up at his entrance, and then glanced at the coin which he laid before her.

"Save the coin for the funeral," she said.

"What?" cried the Black Cardinal. "I came hither for good, not evil."

"You want me to read the stars for you?"

"Certes, I do. Now proceed."

She took the hand which he spread before her, and then, after a short study of it, pushed it away.

"A lys d'or will buy mourning," said she.

"Mourning for whom?" growled Sancia.

"For the Black Cardinal!" was the reply, and Sancia, springing to his feet, left the booth with a sarcastic laugh.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DUEL.

IT WAS evident from the challenge which Andrea had placed in the Black Cardinal's hands that he was not yet done with this dark-handed tool of Catherine Borgia. The scene in the Arno Garden and the death of Momo rankled in his soul, and he had sworn to Francesca that he would have vengeance for both acts.

The dial of St. Stefano was being circled by the great iron hands which were almost together, when a half-muffled figure might have been seen entering the Boboli Gardens from the south. There was a certain craftiness in the stride of

"We have been insulted!"

this figure, and under the cloak that reached below the knees was to be seen the point of a sword.

There were few frequenters of the Gardens abroad, the river wooing them, and the pedestrian was alone. When he gained a certain spot where the foliage was densest, but where it ringed a little cleared space, he paused and looked around.

It would have taken keen scrutiny to have distinguished the features of the Black Cardinal in the midnight intruder, but he was none other. He cast his eye around, and then, seeing no one, advanced another stride and stopped again.

At that moment a second figure came from the north and halted within a few paces of the first. Sancia leaned forward and scrutinized the newcomer.

Almost any person was liable to invade the Gardens, for they were a favorite spot to the Florentines, and lovers were wont to congregate there and whisper sweet nothings into willing ears. But this man, cloaked like himself, attracted Sancia. Surely it was Andrea.

The two men advanced toward each other, and when within sword distance, each threw up his hat, clearing his brows, and the enemies were face to face. The recognition was mutual.

"You have come," said Andrea. "You got my challenge?"

"Would I be here if it had gone astray?" was the rasping reply.

Secure in his hidden doublet of mail, the Black Cardinal unsheathed his blade, drawing it from its pliant casing, and threw himself in an attitude of combat.

Andrea followed his example.

"Why this meeting?" asked Sancia, not that he shirked the contest, but rather that he would know Andrea's heart.

"First, for the evil intent in the Arno Gardens; secondly for the murder of Momo."

"Why charge me with that deed?"

"Because your dagger fits the wound that let out the little fellow's soul."

"There are other poinards in Florence," growled the Black Cardinal.

"But none so dastardly as yours."

"To the blood letting, then!" cried Sancia. "Guard! Andrea Urbino."

Francesca's lover was as quick as his antagonist. In another second the blades rang out in the night, and just then the solemn tones of the great clock began to strike the midnight hour.

If Andrea was heated by passion, the Black Cardinal was, on the other hand, playing the deadly game with exasperating coolness. Once he blooded Andrea's wrist, but the young man turned the trick and swiftly edged his steel along Sancia's cheek. The battle from that moment grew fast and furious. It seemed as though the trembling leaves stopped to witness the combat.

By a dextrous thrust Andrea wrenched the sword from his enemy's hand and it spun a yard away.

"Pick up your blade!" he cried, as the Black Cardinal stood at his mercy.

Sancia did so and once more placed himself in front of his foe. A quick lunge on his part tore a slit in Andrea's crimson doublet, showing for a moment in the fair moonlight his white flesh, but the stroke was returned with interest, and a red fountain leaped from the the Black Cardinal's cheek, dyeing his white collar darkly.

This maddened Catherine's tool. He plunged straight at Andrea, bearing his whole weight with the gleaming blade, and but for a swift parry, the heart of an Urbino would have ceased to beat then and there.

The cloaks of the duelists had fallen from their forms, and they lunged at each other's hearts with all the fury of long pent-up hate. All at once Andrea's blade found the long sought-for opening, and straight it shot toward the Black Cardinal's heart. There was a snap and a ring, and the sword, striking the coat of mail, was shivered in the twinkling of an eye.

Andrea gasped. Now he knew why Sancia had accepted the challenge. He saw his broken blade lying at his feet, and knew that he was at the mercy of this beastly wretch. And it was the mercy of the wolf.

"Fortune favors me!" cried the Black Cardinal.

"Not fortune, but trickery," was the response.

"Call it what ye will. This night you look for the last time upon the stars of Italy."

Could Andrea do nothing but stand and take his doom at the hands of Catherine's hooded serpent? Was there nothing to avert it?

Suddenly into the moonlight sprang a trim figure in close-fitting suit of gray, with a feathered cap upon its head and a rapier in small but agile hands. It landed by a bound in front of Andrea, and a new blade flashed before the Black Cardinal's eyes.

"I see!" cried Sancia. "A hidden reinforcement."

"Not summoned, sir," was the answer from the newcomer, whose voice was wondrously musical. "Stand to your guard, messire, or take the steel in your craven heart." "Mine or yours," was the response. "It shall be two birds with one stone this night."

The truth had burst upon Andrea in an instant. The voice betrayed the newcomer, and he saw, not the boy in the gray garb, but Francesca. At the selfsame moment Sancia had recognized her, too. Andrea's heart seemed to halt in its pulsations. The horror of Francesca's peril seemed to crush him to the earth.

"Hold! My heart, not hers!" he exclaimed.

"Two birds with one pebble, I say," came back into his face.

That moment Francesca sent her rapier straight before her, but Sancia warded off the thrust.

"The wretch wears mail!" shouted Andrea, thrusting out to seize the determined girl. "He is protected——"

"But this is Arnaldo's sword," came the lightning-like interruption, and Francesca bore down upon the Princess' tool, forcing him back a pace, and then her steel lunged at his heart.

It was shivered there like Andrea's. The young Florentine uttered a cry of horror. Francesca's face grew as white as the moonlight that flecked the ground.

"Now!" cried the ruthless Mariano. "Now for the lys d'ors and my dukedom!"

Ere Andrea could throw himself in the path of the leaping sword, a piercing cry rose starward, and Francesca reeled away, staggering back, to be caught in his arms before she could touch the ground. The blade of the Black Cardinal had found her bosom.

"Some other time for thee!" exclaimed Sancia, for he looked down at his own sword to discover that it had parted from its hilt.

Then he turned, and picking up his discarded cloak, walked away. As for Andrea, he saw not the movement, for he was covering Francesca's face with kisses.

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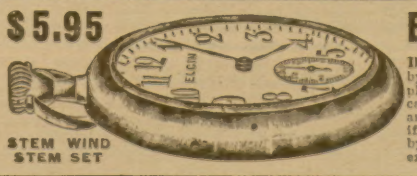

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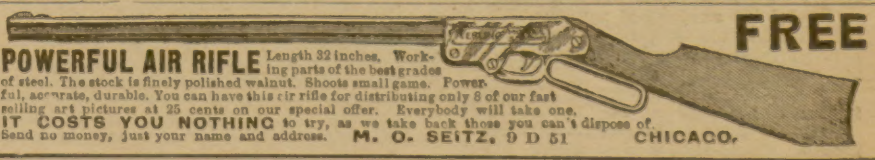

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In The Wrong Flat

Or, *THE CUCKOO CLOCK* By Ella Martin

Lionel Clarke was entering the room.

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CHAPTER IV.

HIS SECOND VISIT.

IT WAS some minutes before Maurice Westbrook recovered from his surprise and grief enough to rise from his chair and leave the place. He paid his bill mechanically, scarcely realizing that he had hardly tasted the food he had ordered. He went back to his office, but he was unfit for work of any sort. He could not keep his mind off of his personal affairs. Ever since the blow fell he had been in a benumbed state of feeling.

At last he began to wonder why he did not do something. Why did he take matters so passively when he might commit murder, or something equally desperate and revengeful? He might shoot the man, or strangle the woman—choke the breath out of that beautiful white throat—or both. Yes, that would be better—to kill them both, and rid the earth of such scum! There could be nothing in the law of the survival of the fittest; otherwise, the earth would be peopled with a better grade of human beings. The weeds had crowded the plants out—that was it! and all the world had deteriorated. For, if Hester was false, there could be no one true or honorable!

But stay! Was it all wrong, or a mistake? What was it he had heard them say, as he sat there within hearing while they discussed, regardless of their lack of privacy, their own affairs? Their trouble was no less than his—in fact, it was the same. He played a part in the drama of their lives; and they were to be pitied equally with himself.

And now his heart softened a little. Hester had not deliberately wronged him, though she loved this other better—the man who was her legal husband. Besides, she had thought of him with pity and justice when asked to choose between them, and refused to take his child from him. And the man! Of course, his cause seemed right to him. Hester was his wife! and therefore, why should he hesitate to claim her from the man who had never in reality been her husband?

And now that he thought it all over, was it true that the world was all bad, as he had been tempted to think? And especially these two? Was it not more likely that they were merely unfortunate, unhappy beings like himself?

And since he had come to this conclusion, he determined to go home and have it out with Hester. He would be calm, and talk it over in a practical manner. Then he would relinquish her uncomplainingly to the man whose wife she really was. She had wedded him believing her husband to be dead, and she had done no wrong. But she was not his wife. He had no claim upon her; he would give her back her freedom, and hide his hurt from her eyes. And she, of course, must have Millie; a child should not be parted from its mother. And he—well, he must learn to live without them both!

He put on his hat and left the office in the middle of the afternoon. It was Saturday, just when he should have stayed longer than usual, but he could not.

When he entered his home, Millie, of course, was not on the lookout for him. But he heard romping and laughter in the parlor, and discovered that the child had a playmate. The two paused in their play when they saw him standing in the parlor door. Then Millie ran to him for a hug, while the other, a still younger child than Millie, stood and gazed at him with wide, serious eyes.

"Who is your little friend, Millie?" her father asked, as he released her from his clasp.

"Oh, her name is Hester, like mamma, and she lives in the other side of the house. I've seen her lots of times; but we just got acquainted today."

"Ah, yes; I have seen her also, I think," Maurice answered, still puzzled at her presence there. "Where is your mamma, Millie?"

"She is over to see Hester's mamma; that is why she came to play with me. They didn't want to be bothered, I guess."

Maurice was wroth! All the excuses he had made in his mind for the couple who had sat so near to him in the cafe fled when he became aware Hester had gone again to meet the man she loved. If she was as blameless as he had tried to believe, why was she leading a double life? It must have been a long time since she learned that she was not his wife!

Then and there he determined to be passive no longer. He would go once more into his neighbor's apartment, and this time he would go deliberately, openly; not in abstraction, but for a purpose. It was in Mr. Hampton's rooms, it seemed, that the two were in the habit of meeting. It was there they had renewed their old associations, and at the same time she was posing as his wife! And he had never known that she was even acquainted with the Hamptons! More duplicity, for she must be on rather intimate terms with these people who were strangers to him.

He had left the two children at their play and went down the back steps, and across the little courtyard. He would follow Hester, and this was her usual route, he believed. He would come upon her unawares; she would doubtless be with—ah, now he remembered the name she had given him—Lionel Clarke! Yes, he would find her with Lionel Clarke, the husband of her youth. And then—what then? What should he say to them? What course should he pursue? He did not know; circumstances should decide.

He went up the steps and entered the house without asking for admittance, the same as he had done before. Only, this time he approached the parlor from the back of the house. The rooms were arranged exactly as were his own, and he had no difficulty in finding his way. He heard voices issuing from the parlor, and paused just outside the room; for neither of the speakers was Hester, and he did not want to make a mistake.

"There are no two ways about it," said one, and the voice was that of the man he had seen with Hester in the cafe—the voice, if his supposition was correct, of Lionel Clarke. "I repeat there are no two ways about it! She is my wife, and I claim her! What shall be done with the child is the only thing that remains to be settled. It is a matter that I am not interested in except as it effects my wife's happiness."

The answer was low-spoken, and was not intelligible to Maurice; it ended with a groan, and the only word he distinguished was Hester's name. It stayed his footsteps, and he stood for some minutes a listener outside the curtained doorway.

"Can't you see, man!" the first speaker went on, "that there is no other way?"

"Yes, there is another way," was the reply. 'One or the other could die!"

Maurice Westbrook was horror-stricken! The last speaker was undoubtedly Mr. Hampton, and the two were trying to settle the same question that the couple in the cafe were discussing almost within arm's length of him a few hours before. It was his affair they were debating, and Mr. Hampton, his neighbor, whom he knew only by sight, was suggesting his death as a means to the end the other had in view. For, of course, he did not expect the husband to get off the earth that he (Maurice) might go on living with the woman whom he had married, legally, as he supposed, ten years before.

But why should Mr. Hampton be consulted about it? What was he to Lionel Clarke, or to Hester? Why did not this man who claimed Hester as his wife come to him? Ah, why should these two be permitted to settle the affair between them, and he have no voice in the matter. He suddenly awoke to the issue of the moment, and stepped forward boldly, standing between the hangings of the doorway. Both men sprang to their feet at sight of him, and regarded the intruder with consternation.

"What are you doing here?" Hampton demanded excitedly. "This is the second time you have walked into my house unannounced!"

It was as he had suspected, then; Mr. Hampton had seen him when he emerged

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from his rooms that time he had absently strayed into the wrong flat, and discovered his mistake only when the cuckoo clock had rudely awakened him from his abstraction.

"That other time I made a mistake for which I beg your pardon," he replied, with dignity. "This time I came for my wife!"

The men stared at him in a puzzled manner, when he had fully expected that this would bring forth the stranger's claim to Hester, and probably a suggestion from Hampton that they should fight to settle it—fight that one of them might die to make way for the other. As neither spoke he added: "My wife came here, so my little girl informed me, and I have come to take her home."

Still no word, no denial that Hester was his wife! Now was the time, if ever, for this stranger to claim her as his own. These two had been, but a moment ago, discussing this very thing. Why should they maintain this silence now that he had confronted them, thus giving them a chance to broach the subject to him?

"I beg pardon," Mr. Hampton said, at length, "but Mrs. Westbrook is not here, at least not to my knowledge?"

Mrs. Westbrook! So he acknowledged that Hester was Mrs. Westbrook, and his companion did not deny it, either! There was no more to be said, and he was about to bid them good night, when Mr. Clarke said impatiently:

"Don't butt in, stranger; our affairs are private and important. What do we care about your wife and her whereabouts? We have troubles of our own."

This was the climax! Utterly bewildered, Maurice Westbrook turned and left the room without a word. He wanted to be by himself that he might think it all over. Evidently he had not got things straight. Something was wrong! The evidence he had stumbled upon at different times seemed to dovetail nicely, but was misleading. There was a mystery in this house, but it began to look as if it did not concern him. Still, there could be no mistake about him having seen Hester with this stranger in the cafe; and he could not be mistaken about that tender parting that had taken place between them in this very house. Besides, there was what he overheard when he first entered the room. And yet—and yet, neither of the two men appeared to consider him as in it at all. There was nothing, then, for him to do but to depart and await developments.

Something developed which he was not looking for, almost the next instant. He was passing another room on his way through the back hall from which issued voices—women's voices this time, and he started violently, for one of the speakers was Hester—his wife! It was not his fault this time that he overheard what was not intended for his ears—he was too dumbfounded to move! The strain on his nerves had been so great ever since he first blundered into this place that he was near a breakdown, and almost a fit subject for a madhouse. Once the nervous tension snapped he would collapse utterly. But wait, Hester was speaking!

"Do you think they will fight to settle it? If so, and one of them should be killed—no matter which one— the other's claim would hold good."

"Good heavens, Hester! How calmly you say it!" cried the other, whom Maurice took to be Mrs. Hampton. The words were sharply uttered, but in a low tone of voice not unlike Hester's own. "Don't you know that it would be murder if one of them should kill the other, even in fair fight?" the voice went on. "It will come to that, I fear—murder!"

"The world is not large enough for both, it seems," Hester said.

"It would be if they only thought so, if they could see alike. But one owns the wife, the other the child. And, oh! how will it all end?"

"I don't know, dear. It is not for us to say. Let the men settle it."

"They never can, they never will! They cannot agree upon a problem of that sort. Think of it! A woman married to two different men, loving one and mother of the other's child, and owing him every consideration. Giving love to one, and owing duty to the other. It is a problem, and there is no way to solve it. Who is to say what shall be done?"

Then Maurice gathered all his strength of resolution and moved forward, and stood as he had lately stood before the men in the doorway, one hand holding back the drapery. He had come into this house on purpose this time, and now he had found the one he was seeking he meant to take her with him when he left. And he intended also to demand an explanation from her when they should be alone once more.

The women looked up simultaneously and saw him standing wild-eyed and white-faced before them, and they clung closer together, a suppressed shriek upon their lips. However, of the three, Maurice was the most agitated. Here was more mystery—more for him to puzzle over. For facing him, clinging together tremblingly, were two Hesters, or two women so nearly alike in form and feature that he could not tell which one was his wife! He was sure now that he was going mad! He had feared it before; now he knew it! His troubles had turned his brain!

CHAPTER V.
THE TRAGEDY.

ONLY for an instant did Maurice Westbrook stand there with the bewildered stare in his eyes. Like a mantle the mystery of things dropped suddenly from them. Hester had kept a secret from him, it was true, but it was not her secret. Mrs. Hampton was her own twin sister, as he could see at a glance. And now he remembered he had been told of a twin sister whom the family never mentioned because of a misalliance in her youth. It was not Hester he had seen taking leave of Lionel Clarke; it was not Hester who had been in the company of this man in the downtown cafe, but her sister, Mrs. Hampton. Therefore, it was she, Hester's sister, who was married to this man from the Klondike, who had returned, like Enoch Arden, but unlike him, proposed to claim his wife from the one who now possessed her.

He was overjoyed at finding his recent misery only a dream, a jealous nightmare, maybe, but still all a mistake; and he forgot that there were still others who suffered. He was happier than he had been for years. It was clear to him now that the stranger and Mr. Hampton were discussing their own affairs when he "butted in," as the man from the Klondike had put it, and also true that they had "troubles of their own."

Well, he was quite willing that they should settle it between them without his help, now that he knew it was their affair entirely. All he wanted was that Hester should come home with him. Now he could see why the child back in his rooms playing with Millie was called Hester. She was Hester's own sister's child, and named for her. And she, poor innocent, and not Millie, was the one who had become a problem. And now he began to pity them, the father and mother of little Hester, who were husband and wife, and yet were not.

But he could do nothing, his advice was unasked, his presence undesired. He must go at once.

"Hester," he said, and his voice was more gentle than usual, "come home!"

Hester Westbrook clung closer to the woman who was a counterpart of herself. She looked at him steadily. Not until that moment had she understood the reason for her husband's coldness. Now it swept over her like a suddenly dawning light. He was jealous! He had suspected her intimacy with the Hamptons, had visited their home and mistaken her sister for herself. And now he had followed her again, and this last visit had shown him he had been mistaken. She was indignant at his distrust. She would control her actions.

"Not yet," she said, in answer to his pleading; "I am needed here. Leave us!"

He did not urge her further. Let her follow her own bent. She need not even explain now. What did he care for the secret of the people in the other flat, except to hope that the clouds might clear away for them? Let Hester tell him or not, he had learned enough to clear her from all blame in his own eyes. If she did not feel free to reveal her sister's secret to him, it was her privilege to keep silent. In any event, he should never doubt her again!

The two children were playing in the yard when he passed through. He cast a happy glance at Millie, and left them playing there. He had nearly gained the back steps of his own home when the sound of a pistol shot came sharp and clear through an open window of the flat he had just left. He paused, hesitated a second, then ran back to the place whence the sound proceeded. His mind, which had been so slow to act while numb with despair, was quick enough to take in the situation now. There must have been a fight, he thought; these men had tried to settle it that way. And only one, the one who survived, should share the earth with the woman whom both claimed. Oh, the pity of it! There was enough of tragedy in the very circumstance of their lives without this dreadful ending! That one of them must die that the other might be happy with the woman both loved was terrible! And but a short time before he had imagined himself one of the chief actors in this drama of life!

But which one? he wondered, as he ran up the steps! Was Mrs. Hampton a widow, or little Hester fatherless? One was not necessarily the other; what a complication of matters it had been!

He hastened to the room where the two men had been closeted. He saw nothing of the women and wondered. As he appeared on the scene, so also did Lionel Clarke; he was entering the room by another doorway.

They glanced quickly at each other, and then down at an inert form on the floor, beside which lay a smoking pistol. Each looked at the other accusingly; but, seeing himself suspected by the other, knew that he was mistaken. Then they went to him and lifted his head carefully. There was a pool of blood upon the carpet. The ball had pierced his heart, and death had been instantaneous.

Maurice straightened up.

"You are innocent of this, I know," he said. "It is a case of suicide. But if the story of your life ever become known you will be suspected. Women sometimes become hysterical when things like this occur. Mrs. Hampton may not be able to withhold everything concerning her past life at the coroner's inquest. Go, save yourself from suspicion! It will not do for you to be found here!"

"I believe you are right," the other replied, "it might be awkward under the circumstances to be found here. But it seems a cowardly act to desert Hyspersia now. I won't do it! I will stay and see this thing through."

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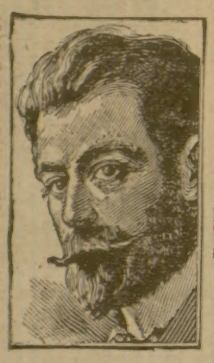

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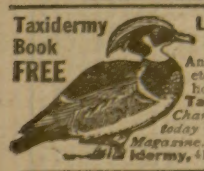

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Maurice Westbrook knew how easy it was to harbor a doubt, and what a hell it created in one's breast. He had suffered these pangs of suspicion himself.

"I had nothing against the man," Lionel said, while he was debating with himself whether he should, for Mrs. Hampton's peace of mind, withdraw from the place instead of staying to comfort her. "It was Arthur Hampton himself who proposed that one of us should get off the earth, as he expressed it. I refused to fight him—he had not wilfully wronged me. And this is how he settled it! Poor fellow, his life has ended in tragedy!"

"Yes, yes," gasped Maurice, "but that cannot be helped now. The greatest favor you can do Mrs. Hampton—your wife, I should say—is to put yourself beyond her suspicion. I will inform the police of what has happened here. Go!"

Lionel hesitated no longer, but went out the way he had come. It was plain to Maurice that he had, like himself, heard the pistol shot while only a few rods away, and immediately rushed back to the house. No one else had heard it, apparently. Only the women, they must have heard. Why did they not come?

He left the body long enough to go in search of them. He found his wife bending over her sister, who had fainted, trying to revive her. He helped to lift the unconscious woman to a couch, and together they worked over her till her eyes unclosed.

"She gave a shriek and fainted dead away when she heard the shot," Hester explained to Maurice. "She feared it would come to this, for Arthur had threatened to end it all with a bullet." Still she did not ask which one was the victim. She dared not ask. Not so with the woman who was returning to consciousness. The moment she opened her eyes she sat up and gazed wildly around. Then, with a swift look up into Maurice's face, she gasped out:

"Which one? Which one is dead?

"Your husband," Maurice answered, forgetting himself that in reality the man from the Klondike was the woman's true husband.

"Lionel? Oh, my God!"

Her thoughts had flown to the husband of her youth, and she sank upon the couch moaning. Maurice perceived his mistake the moment the words had passed his lips, and he hastened to correct the impression he had given her without betraying the fact that he knew the story of her life.

"Mr. Hampton shot himself accidentally. Be brave and bear up under this sorrow."

"Oh, heavens!" she moaned again. "What have I done that this awful thing should overtake me? I was innocent of all intentional wrong. Yes," she added, "it must have been accidental, and it must be so reported. His memory must be protected; it is all I can do for him now, and he is Hester's father.

"I have not been happy with him," she went on, "not very. He was always jealous of that other marriage, of which I told him when he asked me to be his wife. I explained to him that I could not prove my husband's death, though I believed myself a widow. He insisted that he must be dead, and overpersuaded me into the marriage. I shortly repented of it, and I think he did also, for he soon became morose and taciturn."

Then a sudden thought entered her mind. "Where was Lionel when it happened?" she asked, in a strained whisper. "They did not fight, did they? They were together when you left the house, are you sure he was alone when it happened?"

"Perfectly sure," Maurice answered. "Mr. Clarke went out the front door and reached the street at the same time that I set foot in the back yard. I heard the shot because the window was open."

"Ah, then," she said, "Lionel does not know!"

Maurice did not undeceive her. "See here," he cautioned her, "you must mention Lionel's name to no one. To the authorities you must say that he was alone when it happened, which is the truth. I will go now and 'phone to police headquarters."

Mrs. Hampton immediately became hysterical; and it was in this condition the officers of the law found her when they arrived. And so it devolved upon Maurice Westbrook to explain things as best he could in a way to save the dead man's reputation from the stigma of suicide, and also to protect his sister-in-law's secret—the secret he had not been trusted with, but which he had discovered for himself because of his own jealousy.

It was after it was all over, the inquest and the funeral, both of which went off according to Maurice's plans, that Hester came to him after Millie was safely tucked in bed, as on that other night. This time she went straight up to him without any hesitation and put her hand on his shoulder.

He lifted his own bowed head and looked at her; then he drew her to a seat on the arm of his chair.

"I ought to have told you all," she said, "the minute I found out that my sister occupied the other side of the house. But we had been estranged for years, as you know, and at first I did not go to her. When I did, I found that she was in trouble, and I feared something disgraceful would happen, and I was ashamed to tell you. It has turned out worse even than I expected; and you have learned it all in spite of me."

"Yes," Maurice said, sheepishly, and waited.

"Lionel was a ne'er-do-well in his youth, but he made a man of himself—and, after all, Hyspersia was his wife."

"I knew of your sister, Hester," Maurice said, "but I had forgotten everything, except that I loved you, and I was afraid I had lost your love. It all came from living in an apartment house, where one suite of rooms is so like another that a man is likely to blunder into the wrong flat.

"But our own home in the suburbs will soon be ready now, Hester. I shall take you and Millie there. And there shall be quiet and peace and contentment in that home. But no cuckoo clock to remind me of the vision I had once, or thought I had—the vision of my wife, my own sweet Hester, in another man's arms."

"Nor any absent-mindedness, I hope, Maurice."

"Oh, yes," he laughed, "plenty of that, I expect. If I should ever fail to turn up at the proper time, don't report my absence to the police; just come back here and look for me. I may forget and return to the old quarters. You may find me here some time, sitting with my head in my hand, wondering why Millie does not come to call her 'daddy, darling' to dinner."

They both laughed then, and Hester said, "Not so bad as that, I trust."

"And Hyspersia must come, with little Hester, and stay with us," Maurice said, continuing his air-castle building.

Hester kissed him for the generous thought.

"You forget, dear—you have forgotten how forgetful you are," shaking her finger at him, playfully. "Hyspersia will have gone to Lionel by that time."

"Ah, so she will," he answered musingly; "I had forgotten."

And then there was a long happy silence—while Millie was asleep!

The End.

❦ ❦ ❦

She Tested Him.

She had merely wished to put his love to the test. It had not occurred to her that he might impulsively say good-by and go out of her life forever, but apparently she had misjudged him, and now he was gone—gone, alas! and she was left alone to nurse a vain regret.

Half-swooning, she sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands. Tears trickled between her fingers and bitterly she reproached herself.

"Why," she sobbed, "did I let him go? I have lost him! Oh, foolish girl that I was not to have put my arms around his neck before it was too late and asked him to forgive me."

But hist!

Suddenly she raised her head and listened.

Yes, there was some one at the door.

It is he!

Hastily dashing the tears from her eyes, she assumed an uncompromising look. He had returned to sue for peace. She must compel him to humbly admit that he had been wrong. It was her duty to herself to insist that he must surrender unconditionally.

He rang the bell, but she did not rush to let him in. Not until he rang again did she go to the door.

For a moment they stood facing each other. Proudly she waited for him to begin his plea for mercy.

At last he spoke.

"I'm sorry to trouble you," he said, "but I forgot my rubbers."

❦ ❦ ❦

The Father's Suggestion.

Now, necessarily, when the new girl baby arrived, there was much discussion among the members of the family as to what her name should be.

"We will call her 'Geraldina,'" said the fond mother.

"Why not call her 'Esmeralda?'" asked the first grandmother. "I saw that name in a story once, and always wanted to try it on a baby."

"Oh," murmured the second grandmother, "that would never do. Let us call her 'Fanchon.'"

"But don't you think 'Eltessa,' is a pretty name? And so odd, too!" put in one of the aunts.

"Excuse me, ladies," ventured the poor father, who sat near by "but you seem to forget that we are trying to find a name for a human being, and not for a five-cent cigar."

❦ ❦ ❦

Sorry He Learned.

The story is told of a farmer's son who wished to become a famous lawyer, and who went to Springfield, Ill., and accepted employment at a small salary from an attorney. At the end of three days' study he returned to the farm.

"Well, Bill, how'd you like the law?" asked his father.

"It ain't what it's cracked up to be," replied Bill gloomily. "I'm sorry I learned it."

❦ ❦ ❦

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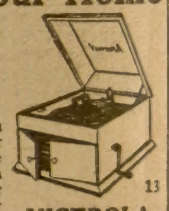

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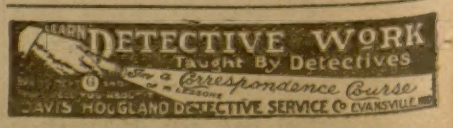

After 30,000 Years

Or, *The Shining Spider* :: By William H. Manning

"It's the Silver Pledge.

[Copyright 1913 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER X.
THE SCOUT.

THE rider had come on a spirited horse at a gallop so brisk that, when the animal was checked, bits of turf flew from the shod feet to the door of the house. Now the horse stood with passive feet, but with arching neck and champing jaws. Clearly, he had enjoyed that final spurt as well as his master.

The master was a man of thirty years, with a strong, dark face, big, penetrating eyes and broad brows. Everything indicated that he was a Targaron come home from somewhere, but he was different from the other villagers. He was slightly swarthy, more keenly intelligent, and, mixed with the unmistakable power of the face was evidence of a half-wild and passionate temper. This man might give way to ill-considered anger while Ysburt and his other brethren remained judicially calm.

The chief had suddenly grown delighted as he saw who was there. He passed outside and grasped the rider's hand.

"Welcome, Irgolf!" he exclaimed. "I am very glad to see you."

The newcomer removed his hat, flung back a dangling lock of hair from his massive brow, and then reached for the extended hand.

"I'm glad to get back, chief!" he said simply. "All well?"

Ysburt began to explain, while Professor Derington again whispered to his American friends.

"Remember the Gaspic history and the prophecy," he said. "The sandy wastes of the West are to be restored to fertility by one man, an inventing genius, and he is to be a hunchback. The hunchback is here!"

The last statement was surely correct. Between Irgolf's shoulders was a protuberance which, though not radically unpleasant, nevertheless placed him among the deformed unfortunates.

"If he is one of these people," Bradford replied, "I fear we may not look for the restorer of fertility in him."

"Why not?"

"Well, there are surely keen wits back of that forehead, yes, far more intelligence than is possessed by the average man even in our university cities; but what chance has one of Ysburt's people to do such an unbelievable thing as to subdue the Arizona sands?"

"Wait!" directed Derington, composedly. "I've seen men of brains in many places, and I know the breed. If this man has not an inventive strain in his make-up, I know nothing of heads."

The chief turned to the group by the door and introduced the newcomer. Irgolf gave them a hearty hand-shake, but as he did so there was an air of barely perceptible coldness about him, as if his greeting did not spring from the heart.

"Our young brother has been away," Ysburt went on, smiling upon Irgolf. "He is the one wanderer of our village. He goes far, stays long, and so has seen pretty much all the West, as you call it, from Idaho to the City of Mexico, and from Texas to the Pacific." Then, lowering his voice, he added: "And he is very wise."

Irgolf laughed shortly, amused, and yet not clear of his reserve.

"The chief has his fancies," he remarked. "Now, I want news of the village, especially of"—his gaze went searchingly to the American—"of your new friends."

"Come to my own house and you shall hear all. You are back just in time, Irgolf, for your rifle may be needed, but other men are lurking near, dangerous men. Our guests have helped up against those evil-doers."

Irgolf stopped short and faced the chief squarely.

"Is it safe?" he demanded sharply, strong accent upon the word "it."

"Quite safe," Ysburt replied, and they resumed their way.

Bradford had forgotten another person, but his unconsciously wandering gaze abruptly apprised him of the fact that Vavaye was standing in the door of her house, frankly inquisitive with her black Apache eyes. Plainly, the squaw liked seeking for local happenings.

"There is one hundred per cent of mischief in that redskin," growled Garrison, uneasily.

"What," asked Derington, "did Irgolf mean by 'it'?"

Garrison wheeled away from contemplation of the Apache.

"I wonder," he responded, "if it was the Shining Spider?"

"That's it, that's it!" cried the Professor, starting. "What else could it be?"

"There are hundreds of things it might be," said Bradford, "but it would be a rash man who passed that suggestion by lightly. Irgolf's manner was that of one with serious things on his mind."

They had entered the house again and taken seats.

"I feel," Derington resumed thoughtfully, "that the return of that hunchback man means new events in this village. Remember the prophecy in the Gaspic history. The sandy wastes of this country shall be restored to fertility, and it shall be the work of a hunchback with genius in his brain. Irgolf looks the part."

"Then you believe the history infallible?"

"I do. Infallible, wise, masterful, and light-giving. When it is read by the world, errors and modern heresies will be shattered. To illustrate, take the claim of modern scientists that man is only an advanced form of ape. When I was in the university this problem was not in my line of labor, but one question buzzed constantly in my brain. Granted that there is a connection between the two, where is the proof that man is an improved ape? Is it not possible that the ape is a degenerate man?

"The Gaspic history settles that point. The Gaspics were wonderfullly enlightened. They had elaborate schools and colleges, they built ships and sailed them afar, they had books and printing presses, and they had scientific men who accomplished wonders. Ah! the pity of it that all their arts were for a time lost, and that mankind sank into savagery!

"About the year seven thousand six hundred and eighty-three after Adam's birth, it was noticed by scientists that, here and there, certain persons were undergoing a physical change with strange accomplishments. The wise men suspected the truth, and all such individuals were isolated on an island called Parsegal. There they were given good homes, the best of food, and just enough employment to keep them in healthy condition.

"As a further experiment, two colonies were formed, one of which had access to the forest, while the other had not.

"The changes went on and the unfortunates grew to resemble apes more and more, developing all the physical points and habits of the simian creation. But whereas those that had access to the forest became pronounced and perfect apes in one generation, it was not until the middle of the third generation that those kept away from the forest reached simian perfection; but the change, even with them, was steady and sure. Of course, the original overseeing scientists had been succeeded by another corps before that time, but in the total the watch was continued for a hundred years, and the point established.

"The conclusion of the wise Gaspics was that, if granted freedom of movement, the degenerating unfortunates would desert cities and towns as soon as their affliction had progressed far enough to make them hear the call of the woods, and hide there before their fellow beings had seriously noticed their condition. This explains why modern man, not having watch over them, is not aware of the facts, but it is only fair to assume that we have today men who are hiding in remote woods, and gradually growing into simian animals.

"Be that as it may, the Gaspics settled the question of the origin of the ape. They are degenerate men. I think, from the descriptions, that the particular type evolved under the watch of the scientists was the gorilla."

"If this is all as you say," interrupted Garrison, "why are some monkeys so small, and some so large?"

"According to the Gaspic theory, the larger ones were well fed during the change in their form, and the small ones poorly fed. In a word, mal-nutrition created a small monkey. You can understand that a hider in the forests would be hard put to it while his tastes in food was changing from that of a man to that of a monkey."

Bradford looked unblinkingly at Derington.

"I have passed the point of daring to doubt anything in the Gaspic history," he said, "and in past years I have often asked myself—I dare say all unprejudiced men have done the same—if it is not as likely that the ape is a degenerate man as that man is an improved ape. It's a poor theory that cannot be permitted to point both ways."

Still thoughtful, he rose and took up the rifle that had lately been Rube Nodd's.

"I'm going to back-track that Apache squaw," he announced. "It would be suicidal for us to sit idle and let her work her treacherous design upon this village. I'll try to learn just where she picked up that mule."

"Watch out for Rube Nodd and his cronies," Garrison warned. "They have revolvers, and Rube will shoot you in the back if he can."

"I know Rube's loose grip on the trigger."

With this the guide left the house. Garrison stood at the door and looked as he crossed the street. There he came upon the selected lad who, pretending to be lazily unconcerned, was really watching to see that the squaw did not get away. After a few words Bradford passed on, and presently disappeared among the outlying rocks.

It was nearly dark when he returned, and, entering the house, found his fellow Americans with Ysburt, Irgolf, and Abelardo for companions. The guide looked weary, and set the rifle down heavily and sank into a chair with a sigh of relief.

"Well," inquired Garrison, eagerly, "did you succeed in trailing the squaw?"

"I found it much easier to trail the mule," replied Bradford, grimly. "I've been over every rod the animal traveled after the earthquake subsided, and I've found where Vavaye happened upon him and quietly annexed him to herself. She had been walking. I back-tracked her footprints for three miles, and finally lost the trail. She had blinded her course beyond that point, and had done it too well to suit my purpose."

"Was she alone?"

"That's the puzzle. Once, though possibly by chance, Rube Nodd's trail was alongside of hers. By the way, Rube and his allies are near us now. We're likely to see them nearer tonight!"

CHAPTER XI.
LOOKING FOR RUBE.

THE last announcement created uneasiness that amounted to consternation.

"Rube Nodd and his gang near!" repeated Garrison, quickly. "What are they going to try?"

"Probably to get back the rifles we despoiled them of a bit ago. Also, beyond doubt, to accomplish their chief purpose in coming to this region."

Irgolf and the chief exchanged a quick glance.

"Let me be clear," Bradford resumed. "I was still trailing the squaw when I chanced upon the tracks of Rube and his fellow vultures. Their toes had been toward this village as they walked, and the footprints were fresh, so the conclusion was inevitable. Rube had survived the choking I gave him, and they were proceeding in their lawless design. I followed them for some time, and finally located them within half a mile of here."

Irgolf leaped to his feet.

"Are they there now?" he demanded.

"Yes."

The Targaron wanderer held high the rifle he had been retaining in his sinewy hand.

"Let us get at them at once!" he de-

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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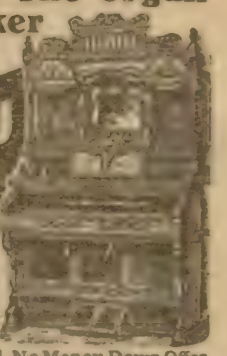

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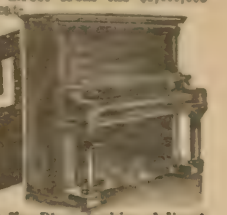

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Wanted to Be Sure.

"Darling, do you love me for myself alone?"

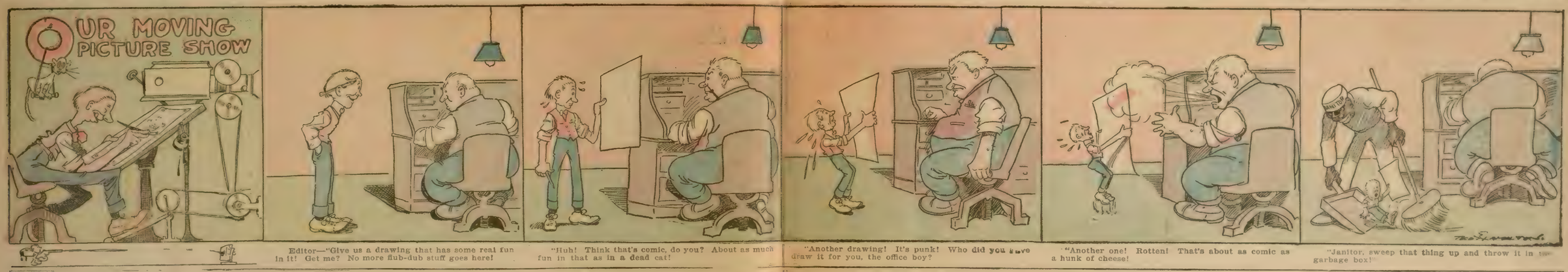
"Why, certainly, Charles. But you really have that $50,000, haven't you?"

Pa's Explanation.

Tommy—"Pa, what is the fourth dimension?"

Father—"The one that fits every fashion; your mother has it."

EDITOR AND ARTIST



Editor—"Give us a drawing that has some real fun in it! Get me? No more flub-dub stuff goes here!

"Huh! Think that's comic, do you? About as much fun in that as in a dead cat!

"Another drawing! It's punk! Who did you have draw it for you, the office boy?

"Another one! Rotten! That's about as comic as a hunk of cheese!

"Janitor, sweep that thing up and throw it in the garbage box!

His Treat.

Father (visiting at college)—"My son, these are better cigars than I can afford."

Son—"That's all right, father; take all you want; this is on me."

In the Present.

"Are you interested in contemporary history?"

"Not much. I am more interested in what is going on now."

Cabbage?

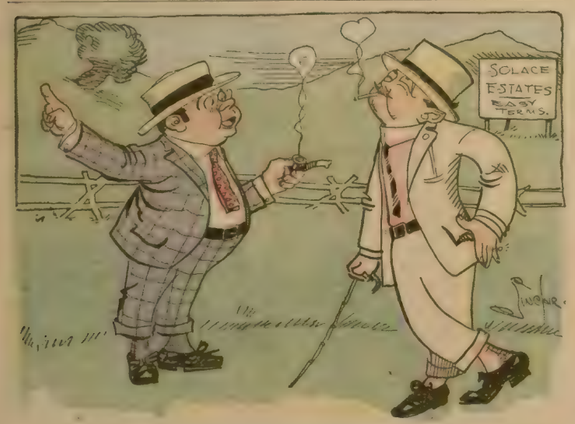
Bragg (of Connecticut)—"How did you find those cigars, Colonel?"

Wagg—"Delicious, old man. We had them for dinner last evening, boiled with corned beef."

Was Only a Novice.

"Do you know anything about flirting?"

"No," he replied sadly. "I thought I did, but when I tried it the girl married me."



Whynot—"Don't you find it awfully quiet out here in the country?"

Sedao—"Rather. But if you listen you can hear the mountain's peak and the bean stalk."

Fairly Pleasant.

"Did the play have a happy ending?"

"Comparatively so. All the money was refunded after the second act."

Their Trouble.

Some men are great successes in making money, but terrible failures in selecting ways to spend it.

School Teacher—"Can you tell me the kind of illumination they had on the ark?"

Little Willie—"Arc lights."

Averting Temptation.

A pompous Chicago merchant, arrogantly carrying the signs of prosperity about him, accosted an acquaintance of his who conducts a successful rescue mission and said:

"James, I'd like to attend one of your meetings."

"Certainly," replied the minister, "but leave your watch and diamonds with the hotel clerk."

"What?" asked the merchant, in astonishment. "Are not the men of your mission converted thieves?"

"True," answered the mission leader softly, "but, George, you look so easy and wholesome. Really, I don't want my men to regret they promised me never to steal again."

Wanted to See the Game.

Tommy—"May I stay up a little longer?"

Ethel—"What do you want to stay up for?"

Tommy—"I want to see you and Mr. Green playing cards."

Mr. Green—"But we are not going to play cards."

Tommy—"Oh, yes you are, for I heard mamma say to Ethel that everything depended on the way in which she played her cards tonight."

Ethel—"A squirrel never spends any time on an empty nut!"

Alice—"Oh, I don't know! Dolly has a stuffed squirrel on one of her hats!"

A Quick Answer.

Owen Johnson says that the best example of repartee he has ever heard came from a New Haven book agent. Johnson was a freshman then, living in Pierson Hall.

The book dealer knocked, entered, looked suavely about, and remarked, "Ah, I see some new faces this year."

A would-be wit of Johnson's class responded, "Why, yes, we change them every year."

Instantly the book agent replied, still more suavely, "Ah! I trust that you will get a better face next year, young sir!"

Equal to the Occasion.

He had just arrived from Europe, and the official friskers in the customs service were sizing up his baggage.

"There is nothing in that trunk but wearing apparel," he insisted, as an official started to open the article in question.

The frisker calmly pulled the stuff out of the trunk and disclosed a dozen quarts of champagne.

"What kind of wearing apparel do you call these?" asked the official.

"Nightcaps," was the reply.

Dense Stupidity.

"Is that clock right?" asked the visitor, who had already outstayed his welcome. His hostess yawned.

"Oh, no!" she said. "That's the clock we always call the Visitor."

The obdurate one sat down again.

"The Visitor?" he remarked. "What a curious name to give a clock."

His hostess ventured an explanation.

"You see," she cooed sweetly, "we call it that because we can never make it go."

And even then he failed to see the point.

One Each.

"Say," began the determined-looking man "I want a good revolver."

"Yes, sir," said the salesman "a six shooter?"

"Why—er—you'd better make it a nine shooter. I want to use it on a cat next door."

The Right Expression.

In the sixth grade at Irving school the teacher was questioning a boy about Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia and the subsequent retreat from Moscow.

"What did the French do then?" she asked.

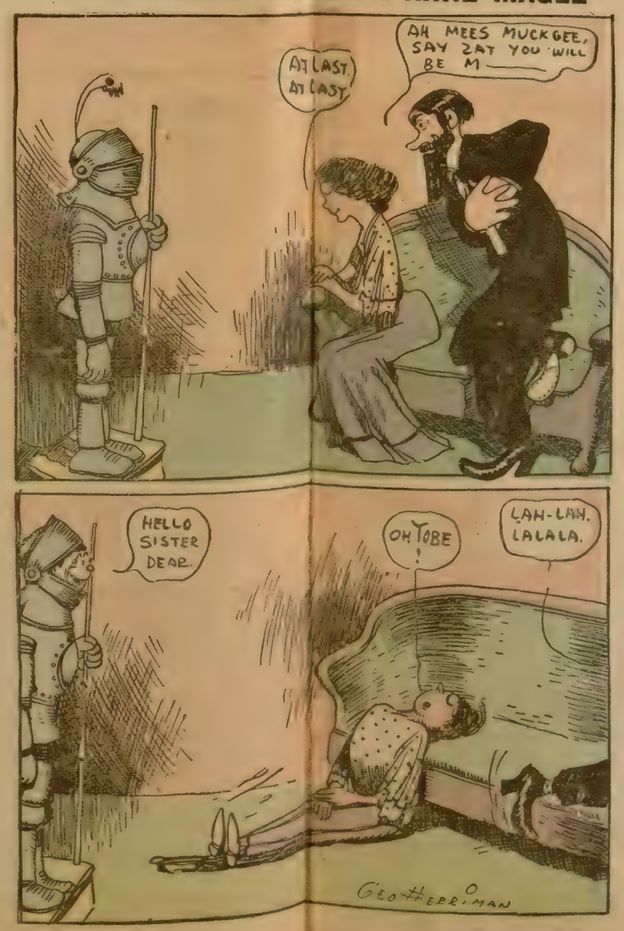
"They ran away," said the boy.

"Yes, that is what they did," said the teacher, "but 'ran away' is hardly the correct phrase to use. What should you have said?"

The boy's face lighted up with understanding.

"They beat it!" he exclaimed proudly.

THE AMOURS OF MARIE ANNE MAGEE



"Honest Injun!"

It was in New York State that Mr. Miller came upon a community where the Indians had been for years, and meeting an old fellow on the highway, asked his business.

"Me preacher," grunted the Indian.

"Well, well," commented Mr. Miller, "what do they pay you?"

"Ten dollars," grunted the Indian.

"Ten dollars a month?" asked Mr. Miller.

"No, ten dollars a year."

"Ten dollars a year! Why, that's a poor salary, isn't it?" gasped Mr. Miller.

"Me poor preacher," grunted the Indian.

A Fish Story.

Fish,
Wish.

Bait,
Wait.

Bite,
Flight.

Roam,
Home.

Buy,
Lie.

"By George! There's two banks suspended. But I suppose it's only temporary embarrassment."

The Unwashed.

Lord Rocksavage is handsome, a fine rider, a superb shot, and very smart in dress. He was strolling on the terrace at Monte Carlo one morning. From the cut of his gray flannels a pickpocket realized Lord Rocksavage's opulence and attempted to steal his sovereign purse. The young nobleman seized in his strong brown hand the pickpocket's grimy paw, and, looking at it disgustedly, he said as he flung it from him:

"How dare you put your hand in a gentleman's pocket without washing it first?"

Fair Division.

She was making the usual female search for her purse when the conductor came to collect the fares.

Her companion meditated silently for a moment, then, addressing the other, said:

"Let us divide this, Mabel; you fumble and I'll pay."

No Crossness.

"Did the attorney for the defense cross-examine you?"

"Oh, dear no!" replied Mrs. Pifflegilder, "he was just as pleasant about it as he could be!"

Always Too Late.

"Old chap, didn't your better judgment tell you not to make that investment?"

"No; my better judgment never tells me anything until after I've gone and made a fool of myself."

She—"You say you were once connected with a college. Were you a tutor?"

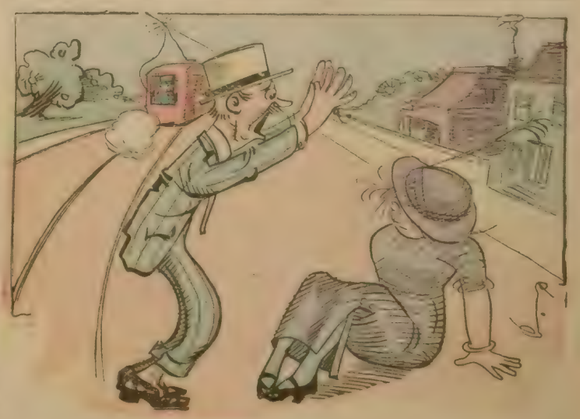
He—"Yes'm; I tooted a horn once fer de football rooters!"

"Poverty may be a blessing in disguise."

"No doubt," replied Miss Cayenne, "but it is such a small blessing and such a big disguise!"

Sentimental Young Lady.—"Ah, professor, what would this old oak say if it could talk?"

Professor—"It would say, 'I am an elm.'"



Mr. Pester—"What made you get off that car backward? Any fool could have told you not to."

Mrs. Pester—"Then why didn't you?"

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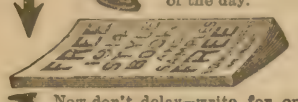

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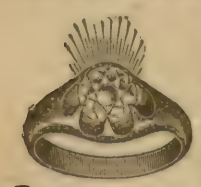

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(Continued from page eleven.)

manded. "The lesson I've learned in the outer world is that he who strikes first has the better chance of winning. Shall we sit like clods and permit them to attack us when we are off our guard? No! Arm yourselves! Chief, call out our best men, and let us go on the warpath!"

Irgolf's temper had been stirred to the boiling point. As he stood, his strong face worked perceptibly, a flush had mounted to his cheeks, and his keen eyes gleamed. He was in a passion, thereby showing the weak point in his mental organization.

"They would not go if we told them to," said Ysburt, shaking his head gloomily.

"Yes, they would!" retorted the younger man, and held his rifle forward. "When guns like this speak, men go!"

"But," remonstrated the chief, shrinking back, "we cannot kill them like animals——"

"Would you have them kill us that way?"

"We must defend ouselves, surely, but to attack while they are peaceful——"

"Somebody will die in these hills. Shall it be ourselves and our women and children, or yonder human vultures?" cried Irgolf, loudly.

Ysburt looked appealingly at Bradford, and the guide was glad to be thus called upon. With a warning glance at Irgolf, who, he hoped, would understand, he calmly entered the conversation.

"The truth lies between the extremes you two represent. We must be ready to deal with them as fierce beasts, but that does not mean that we need necessarily go out and shoot them offhand. Self-defense is our watchword, but the moment they make a hostile move we must act as we would against a tiger that had attacked us."

"You are the man to manage everything," said the chief, suddenly. "You have seen long experience, and know the way of scoundrels like the men who threaten us. As far as defense and war are concerned, I make you director—general, if your prefer the term."

Bradford looked anxiously at Irgolf, for unity was essential to success. Fortunately, the suggestion pleased the wayward Targaron, and he suddenly smiled and nodded.

"Good!" he commented. "I can trust the man who knows the skulking tigers so well. Take charge, Bradford, and you will find me no backward helper. Plan as you think best."

"Well, then," said the guide, "this is the outline for tonight. As soon as it's fully dark I shall go forth again and see what Rube and the others are doing. How long I shall remain away, I don't know, for all will depend upon circumstances."

"If I can go, too——" began Irgolf, but the guide quickly interrupted.

"No, no! Every man is needed here. In outward appearance the village must be in its usual calm. Act as if no danger impended; that is, as far as distant eyes can see. Really, no man will be off his guard. Sleep is not forgotten, but one-half of you must be wakeful, and the other half ready to leap up, rifles in hand, at an alarm."

"We are better armed now," said Ysburt. "Irgolf has brought home a repeating rifle, and that, added to the others, fits us for a good fight."

Bradford continued preparations, desirous of having everything arranged before dark. One of the greatest difficulties was to know how to deal with the Apache squaw. She was asleep, or pretending to be, but, whatever her designs were, she would not be a safe quantity at night. With such grave ideas as to her, she must be watched all the time.

The guide believed that Zirvi was the best person for this espionage, but she demurred when asked, and the chief's wife was selected in her place. She was a shrewd and usually trustworthy woman, and probably could be depended upon to keep awake.

As twilight deepened the guide was about to go on his scout, when Irgolf and an assistant appeared from one of the remoter buildings, which was like a workshop, bearing an odd burden. It was to be seen only imperfectly in the dim light, but its shape was not to be misunderstood. In size about three feet in diameter, it was a rude imitation of a full-bodied spider, legs and all.

Aware that he was looking upon the strange mystery of the hills, Bradford had a deep desire to accost the bearers and ask questions, but they ignored him and passed by, going to one of the central houses. It was the Shining Spider, but without the glare that had previously made it so brilliant. As near as he could tell it was constructed of metal, but the kind was past surmising then.

The reserve of the men was proof that they were not ready to enter into explanations, and he wondered if these would ever come. Until then the object must be a perplexing mystery.

Turning his attention elsewhere he spoke briefly with Ysburt and Garrison, sent a last glance at the house where the squaw kept under cover, and then slipped out of the village. Reaching the cover of bushes as soon as possible, he endeavored to blend with the shadows and baffle hostile eyes from the upper land.

He was engaging in very familiar work, and his border craft came as naturally as the breath he drew. To skulk along soft-footed, seeing all, but trying to remain unseen, that was the lesson he had learned years before. And he was scarcely more noticeable than the inanimate shadows he rivaled as he moved.

Believing that he must go nearly north to find Rube Nodd's party, he tried to avoid notice by first moving nearly east, and then working around in a half-circle so as to gain the village lying in the semi-valley, distinguishable in the dusk of the clouded sky only by its few lights. The small, dull breaks in the gloom left little for hostile eyes to base discoveries upon.

The next step was to find Rube and his allies, and as the desperado was so wily and keen-eared, it was a task fit even for Bradford's trained ability. To beat Rube, a scout must see him before being seen; otherwise the gunman would kill without mercy.

The guide was creeping along farther when a shadowy figure came gliding across his path. The figure was human, and his knife had gone up for defense when the tale told by his eyes carried his hand downward. He looked in amazement.

"Senorita!" he said, his voice low.

The figure wheeled with a frightened start. Zirvi was there.

"Are you mad?" Bradford demanded, a touch of sternness in his speech.

"Oh, don't blame me!" besought the girl. "I had to come."

"Had to? Who compelled you?"

"Nobody, but the peril made me needed. I wanted to watch over my people. I could not stay back there."

"Do you realize the danger you invite——"

"Fully! But it is my daily life, this ranging of the hills."

"But you knew I was to come here."

"Yes," she admitted, "and that was why I came. We scouted together before, you and I. It is true, I came because you were here—comrade!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOUR OF ATTACK.

BRADFORD had been both startled and angry at the presence of the Targaron girl. He had planned carefully, with thought only to the safety of the simple mountain people, and believed he had all things arranged for the best. Now, Zirvi was abroad.

She had met his rather harsh criticism without disdain of his judgment or ill-considered confidence in herself, and his armor of criticism was unconsciously pierced. At the last words, quietly spoken, and not as a device to gain her ends, he found all sternness drifting away from him.

"Comrades!" he repeated, smiling gravely. "We were that, in the getting of the rifles. I have not forgotten. But, senorita, this is a more perilous venture. It is night, and to stumble upon Rube and his party is to—well, if they have their way, to die. I thought you were safe in the village."

"Shall I go back?"

She looked up at him, and her question was as straightforward as all her words were. He tried to think "yes," and to say it, but another word was a tenant in his mind and hostile to intruders—comrades! Somehow, the word had a pleasing element.

"Do you feel safe?" he asked.

"Yes. I have so often walked the hills, even when wild beasts prowled to attack our flocks and herds. And at night, guide, at night!"

Bradford hesitated a little longer, and was lost. Somehow, he felt at that moment capable of besting a score of Rube Nodds.

"Have you a plan?" he asked.

"Only to look," she answered.

"Necessarily, that is the sum total of my own intentions. Just to look and trust the rest to luck. I am—going on."

He hesitated, reluctant to invite her to accompany him in a dangerous venture, and yet unwilling to leave her alone, exposed to evil chances.

"I will go with you—if I may."

"Come!" he directed. "We will test our luck—comrade!"

She laughed so softly that he barely caught the sound, a little note of sincere pleasure; and then they moved again.

Rarely had Bradford taken more pains with his movements than on that night. Zirvi must not be placed in hazards that could be avoided, and his feet trod slowly, lightly, cautiously, while he endeavored to prevent snapping twigs and rolling stones from betraying him. Expert trailer that he was he found himself matched by the skill that went with him. The girl trod like a drifting feather, and almost as lightly. If he had often slow-tracked the lawless men on a wide area, she, on her part, had crept cat-footed among the animals of the hills, usually in peace, though sometimes as a hunter for food. And she was on her native soil.

The darkness was an enemy to the guide's designs. With a moon, or even with strong starlight, he could have skulked along in the shadows and been sure of his advance, but the clouds that hung so thickly athwart the sky made progress slow and unsatisfactory.

The problem was to find Rube and his partners, and they might be a mile away, or lying almost at the feet of the search-

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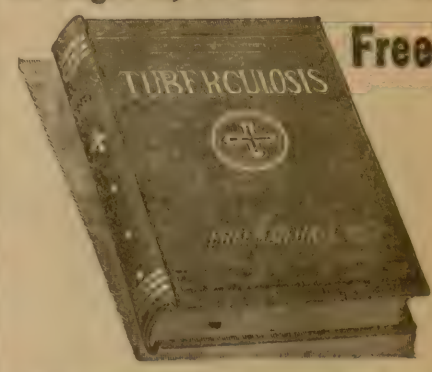

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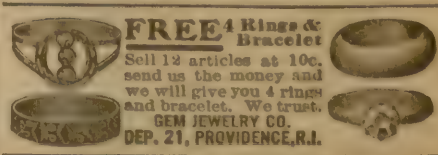

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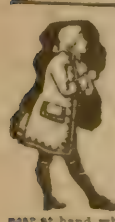

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ers. To happen upon them without warning was to meet great disaster.

He was passing through a shallow barranca when something brought him to a sudden stop. Voices had drifted through the still air, and it was not to be supposed that any of the Targarons were astir there. He held out his hand, and Zirvi came to a halt by his side. Quiet footsteps now joined the voices in sound, and presently dusky figures moved along an intersecting ravine.

The nature of the way brought the trackers within sight of the dull light below, and they paused. It was Rube Nodd's voice that came like a muffled bellow, the bull-like element in the man being curbed with difficulty.

"There the twinklers be," he remarked, well satisfied.

"The town seems asleep," added a second voice, and Bradford recognized Hackley. Pollard was with them.

"Easy game for us," boasted the desperado borderman.

"I'm not so sure of that," argued Pollard. "If that man Bradford is as sharp as you admit he really is, would he leave the bars down and let an enemy walk into the fold?"

Rube chuckled unpleasantly.

"All the world are fools but us three," he explained. "Them chaps sneaked up to our camp and stole our rifles, and so they think us harmless. Be we harmless?"

He held up a rifle, and Bradford felt that it was a good guess that the gang had found the weapons he and Garrison had lost during the earthquake shock. After all, Rube and his peers were not stingless.

"We are armed," the knave went on, chuckling again, "and we are going to have that Shining Spider this very night. Pards, I add one to my share of the plunder; I want more than them diamonds."

"The planned division was your own suggestion," reminded Hackley, rather stiffly.

"Right, my gay tenderfoot, it was. Yes, and it stands, so far as it goes. I ain't a grain of faith in your ability to do that miracle with the Shining Spider, so I say again that if, as is reported, it is plastered over with diamonds, I'll take the sparkles and let you have the blamed old Spider, secret and all. So far, good, but things have been added—one and one make two. Do you remember that Bradford choked the breeze out of my lungs?"

"Yes."

"Well, my extra share is his life!"

"Take it!"

"I will, and inside of an hour."

"No recklessness, man. We want to get away with the Spider secretly."

"Dead easy! It is surely in that outbuilding where Manuel saw it months ago, and we will just saunter in and annex it to ourselves. When that's done, give me five minutes extra, and I'll forgive Bradford. I know the house he sleeps in, and I reckon this will be a mighty good night for sleeping with him—after I get an eye on him for a second."

"No revolver shooting."

"A knife will do it. Can he choke me and get away with his act? Not by the picked bones of the great blue buffalo!"

Rube wound up with a grating gurgle that was not pleasant to hear after his threat, but he quickly aroused.

"To business!" he added, "we will have that Spider in a few shakes."

They resumed their way and, after a slight interval, Bradford turned to Zirvi.

"This has been strangely easy for us," he said quietly. "Instead of being hunted for, they came to our hearing as if glad to help us——"

"But that man's plan—did you hear it?" the girl breathed, her voice shivering. "He has it in mind to kill you."

"The want will stick fast in his mind," replied the guide, serenely. "It's a muddy mind he carries, and his desire is mired there. Anyhow, that's what I hope, but I confess Rube is no man to laugh at. Back to the village, Zirvi! We must get there before these men."

So saying, Bradford cast an anxious glance at the intervening land. If Rube moved briskly it looked like a dubious chance to outstrip him. Zirvi, however, laughed lightly.

"It can be done easily, sir. They do not know the way as I do, nor that there are ravines and one tunnel made by nature that cut the distance almost in half. Come with me!"

She started, and as there was no longer danger of being heard by their foes, slipped along rapidly. In a few minutes they were nearing the first of the houses.

"Wonderfully speedy!" Bradford commented. "May I say that you are the man of the hour?"

"Man or woman, I knew the way. Now I turn over the lead to you."

"I hope to make half as good a record as you—comrade!"

They moved a trifle farther, answered the challenge of the Targaron pickets, and were soon with Ysburt and the other leaders.

"Prepare for warm work," the guide directed. "The enemy are coming to attack us. Get every fighting man in place, for Rube Nodd strikes like a panther when he's ready to hit!"

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Black dropped into White's office and invited him to dinner, stating that he had "all kinds of money." White accepted the invitation and they dined well—so well that when the check was presented to Black he gasped, and requested a loan of White.

"This check amounts to $4.50," he explained, "and I've got only $1.91."

"You said you had all kinds of money!" White replied, disgustedly.

"So I have," Black replied, withdrawing his possessions from his pocket. "I've got a dollar bill, a fifty-cent piece, a quarter, a dime, a nickel and a penny. Now, how many more kinds could you expect a fellow to have?"

Had Both.

Subbubs had taken Chumleigh home to dine. Everything went well until they were seated at the dinner table, when Willie Subbubs remarked, "Why, pa, this is roast beef!"

"Well," said his father, "what of it?"

"Why, I heard you tell ma at breakfast that you were going to bring a mutton head home for dinner this evening."

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KEENEYES, THE DETECTIVE

And the House of Mystery :: By J. Breckenridge Ellis

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CHAPTER XXXII.

AT THREE-TEN IN THE MORNING.

THE postmaster of Tank, Illinois, saw Keeneyes returning from the house of mystery; and he could hardly wait for the detective to come within sound of his voice before he called to know if he had been successful in his efforts to call upon Grensin Moore. While Keeneyes was the last man in the world to be compelled to reveal what he wished to retain, he was always more than ready to engage in conversation with a stranger, for by this means he had often obtained valuable information.

Accordingly he freely admitted that he had seen Grensin Moore, adding that he had spent a most enjoyable time in his house, during which they had discussed aviation and aeroplanes and various other subjects. The postmaster, merchant, and farmer—in short, the only business man of Tank—was surprised to learn that Mr. Moore had not resisted company, and could not sufficiently admire Keeneyes for his successful visit.

"Well, sir," he said, heartily, "you're a wonder. Not by no means is it that everybody that wants to see Mr. Moore gets the chance. When he is at home he can't be catched, and give him half a chance he just flies away when he sees 'em coming. But I knew when I first see you that you was a determined character. And that more than ever makes me sorry you had to walk out there."

"Pray don't mention it. I am not very tired—but I'll sit in this chair, with your permission, till the train comes to carry me away."

"Yes, sit right down; it's a godsend to have anybody in that chair. As I was a-saying, I hate it that you had to walk all the way out there and back. But as I said, my horses are out in the field."

"Pray don't think of it again."

"Yes, but you see it's this way; my conscience sort of hurts me because I might have strained a point—I might have called in one of the horses and put him to the cart; and I'd have done it for you if I'd knowed you to be such a successful man. You see, I thought Mr. Moore wouldn't sit himself down with nobody. And besides, there was another occasion——"

Keeneyes slightly started, so suddenly did a new thought strike him. "Ah," he murmured, "you have been imposed on, I fear."

"Just so—it was five days ago, or nights, so to speak more particular, and nobody can speak too particular if they speak at all. Yes, sir, an order come to me by mail from a party asking the hire of my horse and buggy to go out there to visit Mr. Moore; pretended to have an engagement; asked for the buggy to be standing hitched and ready and waiting so that this party just as soon as he hopped off the train could jump in the buggy and drive out there; said that Mr. Moore had made an appointment with him to receive him in the night-time."

"At about three o'clock?" asked Keeneyes.

"Just so. The train comes in here along about a quarter of three, so as the party was in a hurry, of course he aimed to drive out there and get there a little after three; it'd take him about twenty-five or thirty minutes to get there."

Keeneyes nodded his head judiciously and succeeded in looking rather bored. "I should say, sir, that if your night train gets here at two-forty-five, that I could drive out there by something like three-ten."

"Yes, something like that," the postmaster agreed. "Well, as there was a neat bill inclosed in the letter, of course I had the horse and buggy all ready and waiting, and I was standing at the horse's head as the train come in."

"A strange time for an appointment with such a scientist as Grensin Moore!" murmured the detective.

"Yes, wasn't it. But if you'll believe me, nobody got off that train when it stopped. The party didn't show up, and never has showed up. And to tell you the plain truth, sir, I've not been anxious to hitch up my horses for others that come on that business. But if I'd knowed you could have seen Mr. Moore and got into his house, I'd have known you to be a resolute gentleman and a man of his word, and a man that meant fair."

"Well, at any rate," returned the other, "you lost nothing, since you were paid in advance."

"Yes, but hold on. When the party didn't show up, I got to thinking that the whole business was mighty queer."

"I should have thought that from the beginning."

"Well, you see, the money in the letter kept me from thinking. When you are handed a five-dollar bill for a few hours' use of your horse and buggy, how can you think? You can't. No, sir."

"But——"

"Stranger, you're right. Yes, it was 'but.' When that party never showed up, that day nor the next, and when I learned that old Uncle Globb Sprokitt had been held up and his buggy taken out from under him and his horse away from in front of him by masked men in open daylight, the very morning after I was to have furnished my horse and buggy, what do you think I did?"

"Sir, your movements are not to be divined."

"I went and looked again at that letter I'd got, and more particularly did I look and examine and pry at that five-dollar bill."

"Now I get you!" cried Keeneyes. "It was counterfeit?"

"That's what it was; a counterfeit bill."

"Well, even granting so much; why should that party have sent you a counterfeit bill and caused you to hitch up against his coming, if he didn't intend to come? He at least wasted his two-cent stamp and the trouble of writing."

"That's what I can't make out. But it's plain that he was one of those masked men that took old Uncle Globb's horse and buggy."

"Oh, they left it at a livery stable at a town 'way off from here. There were two masked men, and they had with 'em a bandaged fellow that they pretended had got his eye hurt. They said they'd come in a hurry on his account and that the owner of the horse and buggy would call for it. It's plain that one of them fellows must have been the party that wrote the letter to me; though why he didn't come get his horse and buggy, I don't know."

"For you suppose he really had an engagement with Mr. Moore?"

"At three in the morning—and him a highwayman and counterfeiter? No."

"Then if he had got the horse and buggy what do you suppose he'd have done with 'em, sir?" asked the detective.

The postmaster shook his head. He had no idea. There was a brief silence, filled by intense thought on the part of Keeneyes, in trying to unravel the mystery, and filled by the postmaster with intense effort to try to think of something more out of which to make conversation.

At last Keeneyes looked up and said:

"Sir, I am rather an expert in judging of chirography. I have examined a great many specimens of penmanship, and I fancy I can tell something of the character of a man from the way he writes. Would you object to showing me that letter?"

The postmaster was only too eager to produce it. Keeneyes read it, not so much with regard to the words or expression as with a view to the formation of the letters. As to the matter of the epistle, it was nothing more nor less than the recipient of it had explained. It asked for the horse and buggy, and stipulated that it should be in readiness at the arrival of the two-forty-five train.

The detective examined the five-dollar bill and found it a remarkably good imitation of the genuine silver certificate. He secretly marveled that the postmaster had detected the fraud, but concluded that as a farmer he had so often examined and detected the true grain from the cheat that he had acquired a discerning eye.

However, neither the bill nor the contents of the letter most interested him. He had made rather a bewildering discovery. The handwriting of the letter was unmistakably the same as that of the communication to F. F. Hallowell.

Now, he had all the time gone on the assumption that the letter written the banker, demanding a ransom of twenty-five thousand dollars for Miss Agnes Hallowell, had been written by Pendleton; and all that Grensin Moore had told him had seemed to coincide with this theory. It had seemed certain that Mr. Pendleton had written that letter to Banker Hallowell of Linkville, Mo.

This letter to the postmaster of Tank, Illinois, had been written by the same hand—but why should Mr. Pendleton write asking to hire a horse and buggy on that fateful night, when he must have known he meant to come hither in his automobile with three confederates? He could not have intended to get the horse and buggy after reaching Tank, because he knew he could not get there in his automobile until after three o'clock.

But if Pendleton had not written this letter, who had written the demand for the ransom of Agnes Hallowell?

No, Pendleton had written to F. F. Hallowell—and he had written to this postmaster; why he had written to Hallowell was apparently plain; but why he should have written this sort of missive to the postmaster was inexplicable.

The detective, though now more bewildered over the mystery of George Wendell Pendleton than ever, congratulated himself on this conversation held with the storekeeper and postmaster and farmer. He had at least picked up more facts to be puzzled over. There seemed, however, nothing further to be learned at Tank.

If Grensin Moore had not been frank with him, Keeneyes was deceived; and that he should be deceived in a man with whom he had talked so intimately, he could not admit.

When the train arrived, he was impatient to be gone. That night, at about half-past ten o'clock, he stepped once more upon the station platform of Bird City.

Just before reaching the town he had withdrawn to the privacy of the smoking car where, finding himself the only man in the compartment, he had dextrously assumed the disguise of Buck Green. Now once more in Buck Green's native town, he slouched along the street in the semi-gloom—for the electric light company of Bird City was cruelly economic—with the look, the movements, the manner of the Bird City farmer.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN THE BLACKSMITH SHOP.

KEENEYES, by means of his private key, let himself into the blacksmith shop. As he opened the door he discovered that some one was already in the shop. From a distant corner came the rays of a coal-oil lamp which had been lighted and set upon a work-table, and near this lamp were two men.

At sight of Keeneyes they uttered ejaculations of astonishment, which were quickly changed to pleasure, and the older of the men hurried forward, exclaiming: "Here he is now!"

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From the description which had been given him, Keeneyes recognized in this man Jilpy Thompson, the blacksmith.

"Hello, Buck!" exclaimed the second man, who answered to the description of Smith Weller, one of Jilpy's cronies.

Keeneyes, congratulating himself that his disguise was so successful, shook hands with both men, careful, however to keep his back to the light and to stand as far away from it as possible.

The men were consumed with curiosity as to his recent adventures, but the detective would tell them nothing.

"No, no," he said, imitating the nasal tones of Buck Green, "the bargain is for me to explain the mystery at the end of a month, and I've been on the job only a few days."

"But you don't pretend that you've found out anything, huh?" demanded Jilpy.

Keeneyes shrugged his shoulders.

"What are you fellows doing in here at this time of night?" he asked.

"We were just talking about you—wondering what had become of you, and if we hadn't done wrong to take you off your farm to set you on such a desperate undertaking as this."

"But why do you call it desperate? All you know is that Pendleton can't make a living without working to earn it."

"Yes, but since his daughter disappeared——"

"What?" ejaculated Keeneyes, almost forgetting to disguise his voice.

"Soho! So you didn't know as much as us, it seems!" cried Weller.

"The fact is," Keeneyes apologized, "I've been away from Bird City——"

"Yes—and we have found out more than you, simply by staying at home," chuckled Jilpy Thompson.

"Well, well," returned Keeneyes, impatiently, "tell me what you've learned."

"As I said—Miss Margaret Pendleton has disappeared."

"How?"

"Goodness knows! But it's certain her father knows no more about it than you or me. He is sure on the warpath."

"When did she disappear?"

"Last night."

"What's known about it?"

"Only that four nights ago a stranger came to town in a big hurry, driving over from the junction, and up to the house he whipped his horses, and out he got and in he went——"

"Four nights ago!" echoed the detective. "Well, and what did Mr. Pendleton have to say to this man?"

"Mr. Pendleton wasn't at home—he'd gone off somewhere in his auto. He was away on one of those mysterious trips that you are trying to unravel."

"But Mrs. Pendleton was at home, wasn't she?"

"Yes—her and Miss Margaret. Well, he stayed there upwards of two hours; then he comes out and drives away, and that was the last of him."

"And then what?"

"And then, last night, Miss Margaret disappears."

"But what had the coming of that stranger to do with her disappearing?"

"That's for you to find out, being so penetrating," scoffed Smith Weller.

"Maybe there was no connection," suggested Keeneyes, very thoughtfully.

"Oh, shucks!" cried the blacksmith, in disgust.

"What sort of looking man was that mysterious stranger?"

"I was the only one that saw him drive up to the Pendleton place," said Smith Weller, "and as it was dark, I didn't make him out very well; but he came through Main street, and other fellows, seeing a stranger in Bird City, naturally took stock of him. From what I can gather he wore nose-glasses with a little gold chain dangling from them."

"Dark or fair?"

"As to that, I can't tell you, Buck."

"Thin or fat?"

"I don't know anything except them nose-glasses with the tiny chain."

Keeneyes grunted his disgust at such incompetence. Then he asked:

"What theory has Miss Margaret's father or mother to account for her disappearance?"

"They haven't the slightest idea in the world," said Weller. "I went, as soon as I heard it, to see how they was taking it. Pendleton, he seemed most crazy, and as black as a thunderstorm."

"What about Mrs. Pendleton?"

"That's the strange part," remarked Jilpy Thompson, with the air of one who had heard the story many times.

"Yes," Weller agreed; "Mrs. Pendleton seemed to take the whole thing unusually cool and calm."

"What is your opinion?" Keeneyes persisted.

"Well, there can't be but one idea," Weller declared; "evidently Miss Margaret has eloped with that fast-driving chap. Mrs. Pendleton suspicions it, but her husband, not knowing, is all at sea."

"Is Pendleton at home this night?"

"So far as we know. He don't seem to know where to go or what move to make."

"I will go to him at once," declared the detective, "and I will show him his next move."

"You talk mighty bold, Buck!" declared Jilpy, admiringly. "And I do say you've made a curious collection in that suitcase hidden away in the corner."

"Oh!" Keeneyes exclaimed, with some displeasure, "have you been into it?"

"How come you by that dark-lantern, Buck?" asked Smith Weller. "It's the first I ever saw in my life that wasn't in a picture."

"Yes," the blacksmith agreed, "I reckon it's the first dark-lantern that ever come to Bird City, and we'd like to know how you got onto it."

Keeneyes, without deigning to answer these demands, hurried from the blacksmith shop and went at once to the Pendleton mansion, from whose windows various lights showed that the family was still astir.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
THE DISAPPEARANCE.

WHEN Keeneyes rang the bell, it was past the time when ordinary callers were to be expected. It was Pendleton himself who opened the door, and his eager manner indicated that he hoped to hear some tidings of his missing daughter.

When he saw, as he supposed, the farmer who had annoyed him by a former visit of curiosity, and with whom he had been thrown so unexpectedly and so unpleasantly in the house of mystery, he started back with frowning brow.

"Good evening, Mr. Pendleton," said Keeneyes, in the voice of Buck Green. "I would like to have a few words with you."

"Mr. Green, the hour is late; and I am in no mood for visitors. To speak plainly, you and I can have nothing in common."

"I should think," retorted Keeneyes, "that our adventure in Grensin Moore's cellar and in the tank should give us something in common."

Pendleton's face grew darker.

"You have promised me on your honor never to speak of that night's occurrence," he said fiercely.

"O, yes, of course—and Buck Green is a man of honor," retorted the other. "But to say we have nothing in common is ridiculous, after those occurrences. I don't want to talk about them. But they give me a hold on you, in a way."

"In what way, since you are honor-bound not to use the knowledge you acquired that night."

"In this way, Mr. Pendleton; we have been in danger together, we have escaped with our lives together, and now we are on a footing to talk more smooth than when I first came into the house."

"But I tell you I don't want to talk; I can't talk. Good heavens, man! Don't you understand that my brain can't work intelligently under the stress of this terrible misfortune?"

"Then you can listen."

There was something in Keeneyes' manner that puzzled Pendleton. He seemed a new farmer. Reluctantly he stood aside and allowed him to go into the hall.

"Your daughter has disappeared, Mr. Pendleton, and I'd like to help you find her."

Pendleton smiled ironically. "You still think yourself a good detective," he remarked disparagingly.

"Rather so," said Keeneyes. "Now I have been told that a stranger came to this town four nights ago—in short, on the very night you and I were imprisoned in Grensin Moore's cellar with Fred Pinney. Have you heard of this stranger's sudden and late call at this house?"

"Naturally. My wife told me about it."

"Oh! Then you know who it was?"

Pendleton shook his head impatiently. "What matter?" he retorted. "That has nothing to do with you." Then, as an afterthought, he said, "You don't imagine that you know who it was, do you? My wife was not present when he had his conversation with my daughter, and my daughter did not inform her who it was."

"But, Mr. Pendleton, isn't that an amazing circumstance?"

"What do you mean?"

"Such a late visitor and your wife not to know his identity."

"My daughter does not discuss all her affairs with her parents, as her disappearance proves to you."

"But what singular affairs."

"That, however, is none of your business, Mr. Green. Have you any other?"

"Why, yes, I have. You asked me just now if I imagined I knew your daughter's mysterious visitor. I imagine it was the party called Wallyker."

Pendleton started and looked more keenly at the detective. "And pray, what do you know about Wallyker?"

"Oh, you will remember that when I was discovered in your automobile I was mistaken for one Wallyker, and in order to keep with your party I let the mistake pass uncorrected."

"Of course, I remember that, but——"

"But I soon learned that the real Wallyker failed to meet his appointment and did not join you that night."

"An exceedingly simple discovery to make, to be sure," mocked Pendleton.

"Yes, simple enough. But where was Wallyker?"

"It seems that you think he came here to see my daughter on that night."

"I think so indeed."

"But why should he have come here? And if so, why didn't she tell me? She heard me wondering what had become of Wallyker; if she knew he'd been here on that night she could easily have relieved my anxiety."

"I guess you're right," said Keeneyes. "But if she aimed to elope with him, she mightn't want you to know about it."

Pendleton dropped his head and seemed lost in thought. It was possible that he had thought of this before, but if so, with no definite ideas. The detective had made the suspicion more palpable.

He looked up, presently. "Mr. Green, you seem much improved since our last interview in this house. I do not understand it."

"I've done a lots of studying," Keeneyes explained naturally.

"Do you know the man who passes as Wallyker? Did you ever see him?"

"Never, that I know of."

"Then how came you to entertain this idea?"

"Just putting two and two together."

"And you've come here just to tell me this?"

"That was my main reason."

"What other reason had you, or have you?"

"Well, sir, I'd like to help you; and if you'd give me a description of this so-called Wallyker, and some tracers to go by, I'll put out after him."

Pendleton smiled grimly. "Thank you, no. I'm greatly obliged. But you'd much better stick to your farm, sir."

"Then you can't tell me anything about Wallyker?"

"I think it best not to divert your thoughts from your crops."

"Yes, sir," said Keeneyes. "Then good evening to you, sir."

"Good evening, Mr. Green."

Keeneyes slouched out of the front door, stumbled awkwardly over the doormat, and left the yard.

Suspecting that the blacksmith and Smith Weller would be awaiting him at the shop with countless questions, the detective struck out in the opposite direction and swung along briskly. Upon his face there was a triumphant and significant smile. Evidently he had learned more than had Pendleton during his recent visit.

(Continued on page twenty-three.)

Ithaca Guns

The U. S. Government buys Ithaca Guns for Navy Officers—Uncle Sam always buys the best. Locks simple, hammer one piece, coil main spring guaranteed forever. Cornell University timed our lock. Hammer falls in 1/100 of a second—will increase your score. Beautiful catalogue FREE—describes 18 grades—$17.75 up. Five bores—28, 20, 16, 12 and 10. Send us this adv. with 15c. and get beautiful hanger—regular price 25c.

ITHACA GUN CO. BOX 22 ITHACA, N. Y.

Government Constantly Needs Men

CHANGES and growth in every department of the Civil Service call for new men all the time.

The Parcel Post Service for instance has given good paying positions to thousands. This department is growing so rapidly that it will need thousands of new employees within the next couple of years.

The International Correspondence Schools have a Course to fit applicants to pass the Civil Service examinations.

Over a thousand persons have secured Government positions with the help of the I. C. S.

All Americans over 18 are eligible. Send for free I. C. S. Civil Service Book, and learn how the I. C. S. can prepare you.

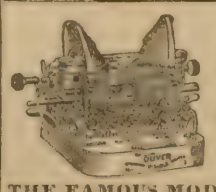
INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 1114 Scranton, Pa.

MUSIC TAUGHT FREE

At Your Home. Write today for our booklet. It tells how to learn to play Piano, Organ, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Banjo, etc. Beginners or advanced pupils.
AMERICAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 17 Lakeside Bldg., Chicago

Another Typewriter Innovation

The Typewriters Distributing Syndicate now makes another offer—no less in importance than its Famous Low Price Offers, accepted by so many of the readers of this magazine.
This is another great move in the plan of this Syndicate to make universal typewriting a reality.



$4.00 Per Month Buys This Visible Typewriter

THE FAMOUS MODEL NO. 3 OLIVER! The machine with the type bars that strike downward. The principle that makes visible writing mechanically practical.

This Machine is So Simple that Children learn to operate it in ten minutes.

Yet, so fast that experts choose it.

So strong that shrewd business men select it.

$4.00 A MONTH IS THE REGULAR RENTAL RATE, for machines of this quality, and yet—we sell at this rate.

The machine you get is just as fully equipped, just as perfect as though you paid cash. You get every perfection, every device which ever went out with this Model. You get all the extras—metal cover, baseboard, tools, instruction book and the broadest guarantee.

The Offers of this Syndicate have astounded the Typewriter World! They are a stupendous and far-reaching inducement to encourage the universal use of typewriters.

NO CASH UNTIL YOU SEE IT. Until you try it in your home or office. Then—you make your decision. No salesman to influence or worry you. If you keep it you pay only $4 down. It will earn its own way thereafter. Stop Paying in 13 Months—Only $56 in all. No interest. No chattel mortgages. No publicity. No delay. Positively the best typewritor value ever given. The best selling plan ever devised.

IF YOU OWN A TYPEWRITER NOW trade it as part payment. We will be liberal with you.

Send your name and address on the coupon and we will tell you more about this unusual offer—more about this splendid typewriter. It won't cost you anything. You won't be under any obligation—and we promise not to send a salesman.

Tear out coupon NOW—Lest you forget.

Typewriters Distributing Syndicate,
166 J1 North Michigan Blvd., Chicago

Typewriters Distributing Syndicate,
166 J1 North Michigan Blvd., Chicago
Gentlemen;
You may send, without placing me under any obligation, further information of your typewriter offer.

Name.....

Address.....

My old machine is a..... No.....

$4.95

STEM WIND Open Face Only

THIN MODEL SOLID GOLD FILLED GUARANTEED 20 YEARS $4.95

Elegant plain polished or engraved, screw back and bezel, dust proof gold filled case (guarantee stamped in case) open face gold sunburst or white enamel dial, fitted with 7 ruby jeweled adjusted patent lever movement, warranted a correct timekeeper. Before you buy a watch send us your correct post office address and we will send you this beautiful watch

BY INSURED PARCEL POST C.O.D. $4.95

Mention if you want Ladies O size, Boys 14 or Gents 16 size, white enamel or gold sunburst dial, plain polish or engraved back, pay your postman our special sale price $4.95 only and the watch is yours. Mutual Sales Co., A10, 306 W. Madison St., Chicago, Ill.

FREE 2 Full Qts. Riley's Flag Staff Whiskey

To introduce our Celebrated PRAIRIE ROSE and Famous FLAG STAFF WHISKIES to the readers of the Ledger, we will give, for a limited time, FREE OF CHARGE, 2 FULL QUARTS of the FLAG STAFF with a shipment of 1 gallon of PRAIRIE ROSE (in glass jug or full quart bottles as preferred). The price of the PRAIRIE ROSE is $3.60 per gallon. The price of the FLAG STAFF is $1.50 per quart.

THIS IS OUR OFFER

4 Full Quarts (128 ounces) RILEY'S PRAIRIE ROSE $3.60

2 Full Quarts (64 ounces) RILEY'S FLAG STAFF (Worth $3) FREE

Express Charges Prepaid

We will ship the above offer with the understanding that if the whiskey is not perfectly satisfactory, after you have tried it, you may return same at our expense, and your money will be refunded. Reference, Stock Yards National Bank, Kansas City, Mo.

Order at once, as this offer will be open only a short time. Cut out and return this ad with order. Send remittance to W. R. Riley, or

W. R. RILEY, DIST'G. COMPANY,
Station "A" Department I Kansas City, Mo.

FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1895, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday

By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscriptions to the Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Postoffice or Express Money Order, payable to the Chicago Ledger. The address tab on your paper shows the date to which your subscription is paid.

BACK NUMBERS.

Back numbers of the Ledger promptly mailed. Always give the dates desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address. Price 5 cents per copy.

BEWARE OF STRANGERS.

No person is authorized to take subscriptions for the Ledger unless he or she is well known in the city or village where they have been appointed agents to sell this paper every week.

ADVERTISING RATES.

For display, $3.00 each Agate Line; for Classified, 30 cents a word, per insertion for 1,200,000 circulation in the Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

1,200,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

Many an eloquent sermon is wordless.

There is nothing as impossible as some people.

It doesn't take a very strong woman to break a man.

Even a fast young man can't catch up with tomorrow.

Blood will tell—usually the things we do not want told.

Ever notice how many friends you have when they need you?

You can't tell by the load a man is carrying where he got it.

It's the fall of the year that breaks the backbone of summer.

Lots of people pray for things they never think of working for.

When it comes to reflecting a woman is not in it with her mirror.

None of us can afford to say all the fool things we would like to say.

Women usually have more religion than men because they need it less.

If you didn't get what you want, be thankful if you didn't get what you didn't want.

A pretty girl may be the apple of a young man's eye and the lemon of his purse.

The successful man is one who is on the job when the main chance comes along.

Some men haven't sense enough to distinguish between friends and acquaintances.

The looking glass reveals our defects to ourselves. The wine glass discloses them to others.

A man who got rich in the poultry business says his hens laid the foundation of his fortune.

About the only time a woman has nothing to say is when she has a chance to praise one of her rivals.

Certainly a man's wife may have been the only woman he ever loved—at the time they faced the parson.

It's almost as dangerous to be on friendly terms with a gossip as it is to be on unfriendly terms with one.

The mere fact that a man doesn't laugh at his own jokes is no indication that he doesn't think them funny.

Possibly you may have noticed that many a young man's success in life was due to the fact that his father was poor.

After a girl has tried every other way to get a proposal and failed, she takes to standing at the side door with her sleeves rolled up and an apron on.

WANT ADS

Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 30 cents per word for 1,200,000 circulation.

AGENTS WANTED

$1,200 Cold Cash—Made, Paid, Banked in 30 days by Stoneman; $15,000 to date. Join our famous $1,000 class—absolutely insures $1,000 per man, per county. Korstad, farmer, received $2,200; Schleicher, minister, $195 first 12 hours after appointment. Ten inexperienced men divided $40,000 within 18 months. Strange invention startles world. Think what it does: Gives every home a bathroom, with hot and cold running water for $6.50. Abolishes plumbing, water-works. Self-heating. Hart sold 16 in 3 hours—$5,000 altogether; Lodewick 17 first day. Credit given—investigate. Exclusive sale means $1,000 and more. Allen Mf'g Co., 3775 Allen Bldg., Toledo, Ohio.

YOUNG Man, Would You Accept and Wear a fine tailor made suit just for showing it to your friends? Or a Slip-on Raincoat free? Could you use $5 a day for a little spare time? Perhaps we can offer you a steady job? Write at once and get beautiful samples, styles and this wonderful offer. Banner Tailoring Co., Dept. 500, Chicago.

AGENTS—Get Particulars of One of the Best paying propositions ever put on the market. Something no one else sells. Make $4,000 yearly. Send postal today for particulars. E. M. Feltman, Sales Mgr., 6725 Sycamore St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

AGENTS—We Offer Regular Weekly Salaries besides large cash profits on each order to introduce our splendid Toilet Products. If $25 to $50 per week looks good to you, apply at once to—E. M. Davis, R34, Davis Block, Chicago.

WE Will Pay You $120.00 to Distribute Religious literature in your community. Sixty days work. Experience not required. Man or woman. Opportunity for promotion. Spare time may be used. International Bible Press, 515 Winston Bldg., Philadelphia.

MANUFACTURER of New Exclusive Linen heel and toe guaranteed hosiery wants agent in every county. Sales enormous. Re-orders insure permanent, increasing income. Protected territory. Credit. G. Parker Mills, 720 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.

AGENTS Sell Rich Looking Imported 36 by 68 rugs, $1. Carter, Tenn., sold 115 in 4 days. Profit $57. You can do as well. Write for sample offer, selling plan. Exclusive territory. Sample rug by parcel post, $.98 prepaid. Kondon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

PORTRAITS, Medallions, Photo Pillow Tops, luminous crucifix, photo china plates, frames, sheet pictures, etc., at prices below the lowest; guaranteed; rejects credited; prompt shipments; 30 days credit; catalogue and samples free. Jas. C. Bailey, Desk 6-1, Chicago.

KENTUCKY Distillery Wants Local Representatives outside of Chicago to solicit saloon and drug trade on commission for Kentucky whiskies and other liquors. Big money. Write at once for territory. Woodland Co., Warehouse 41, Covington, Ky.

ATTENTION Agents: Self-Feeding (Oil) polish mops just patented. Sells at sight. 100% profits. Repeat orders. Act at once. Eureka Sales Co., A-116 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

AGENTS, Earn $10 Per Day. Sell Three 50c ties $1.00. Free monogram gold cuff links and stick pin. Bewden cleared $71—5 days. Cooper $40—4 days. Free samples. Comer Neckwear Co., 39 Second St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS—Make Big Money and Become Sales managers for our goods. Quick and constant orders for you. Exclusive territory. Particulars and samples free. German-American Drug Co., Dept. D, Washington, D. C.

BIG Money Selling Our Line $10 to $50 Profit each sale. Great demand. Exclusive territory to hustlers. Write C. Hemple Sales Mgr. 175-H No. Sangamon, Chicago.

$2.50 Per Day Salary and Additional Commission paid man or woman in each town to distribute free circulars and take orders for concentrated flavorings in tubes. Ziegler Co., 443 G, Dearborn St., Chicago.

AS Manufacturers of Zem-Fla and Forkola We assure you there is genuine demand. Sales enormous. Re-orders insure you a steady, nice position. Profits will please you. Bacorn Co., Elmira, N. Y.

WILL Pay Reliable Man or Woman $12.50 to distribute 100 free pkgs. Perfumed Borax Soap Powder among friends. No money required. B. W. Ward Company, 218 Institute, Chicago.

AGENTS—You Can Make $40 to $75 a Week selling guaranteed aluminum ware to consumers. Complete sales course free. Your territory open. Answer quick. Div. B-L American Aluminum Co., Lemont, Ill.

AGENTS—Make $25 to $100 Every Week Selling sign letters for stores and offices. Success guaranteed. Samples and particulars free. Metallic Sign Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago.

ONE Person Wanted Each Locality as General agent for complete line Polish mops, self wringing mops (5 styles), fibre brooms. Hilker Mop Co., 1202 Grand Ave., Chicago.

I WILL Start You in the Mail Order Business if you will handle my goods. Crest Co., B 5, Atlantic City, N. J

REMNANT Store, Cincinnati, Ohio. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Agents and storekeepers supplied.

PRINTING

100 ENVELOPES, Your Name and Address printed on the corner, thirty cents, postpaid. Samples free. D. M. Brencisa, Wheeler, Indiana.

HELP WANTED

GOVERNMENT Jobs Open to Men and women. $65 to $150 month. Vacation. Steady work. Short hours. Common education sufficient. "Pull" unnecessary. Thousands of appointments coming. Write immediately for full particulars and list of positions open. Franklin Institute, Dep't S 20, Rochester, N. Y.

WANTED—Honest Men and Women to Address, mail and fold printed matter. No experience required. Steady work. Good pay. Full instructions, samples, etc. 12 cents. Write today. Co-Operative Mercantile Co., Box B1456, Springfield, Mass.

MOTION Picture Plays Wanted—You Can write them. We teach you by mail. No experience needed. Big demand and good pay. Details free. Ass'd M. P. Schools, 646 Sheridan Road, Chicago.

I WILL Start You Earning $4 Daily at Home in spare time, silvering mirrors; no capital; free instructive booklet, giving plans of operation. G. F. Redmond, Dept. 400, Boston, Mass.

SONG Poems Wanted—New Plan. Big Money. Past experience unnecessary. Send poems or melodies. Free book and advice. Hayworth Music Co., 655 G, Washington, D. C.

WRITE Motion Picture Plays. Great Demand. Big pay. Free particulars. United Picture Play Association, San Francisco.

MALE HELP WANTED

A MONEY Proposition. Do You Want to Cooperate with me in a profit-sharing mail order business? I will furnish the printed matter, advertise in several papers, furnish goods to fill orders for one half the profits. Write for particulars. Desk 701, Hazen A. Horton, Tekonsha, Mich.

GET Prepared for Government Examinations by former United States Civil Service Secretary-Examiner. No "Free Preparation" or "Positions Guaranteed" schemes. Straight proposition. "Real Courses." Booklet without obligation. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

FREE Illustrated Book Tells of About 300,000 protected positions in U. S. service. Thousands of vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Just ask for booklet S-1034. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

DETECTIVES—Own Locality; Experience Unnecessary; secret service; enclose stamp. Sturgill Detective Agency, Norton, Va.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

A COMFORTABLE Living Earned at Home sewing plain seams; any sewing machine; all home work; no canvassing: Sewers wanted in each town; state time can sew: No triflers; samples, etc., 10c returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Company, New York Jobbers, Dept. B. L., Rehoboth, Delaware.

YOU can write a short story. Beginners learn thoroughly under our perfect method. We help those who want to sell their stories. Write for particulars. School of Short-Story Writing, 77 Page Bldg., Chicago.

WANTED—Apron Makers. Send Dime Which will be returned if not satisfied, to Kenwood Apron Shop, 4104 Michigan Ave., Chicago.

LADIES Can Make Shields at Home; $10 Per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES.

FREE for Six Months—My Special Offer to introduce my magazine "Investing for Profit." It is worth $10 a copy to anyone who has been getting poorer while the rich, richer. It demonstrates the real earning power of money, and shows how anyone, no matter how poor, can acquire riches. Investing for Profit is the only progressive financial journal published. It shows how $100 grows to $2,200. Write now and I'll send it six months free. H. L. Barber, 453, 28 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

$100 to $300 Weekly in Moving Picture Business. Easy payment plan free catalog. Acorn Moving Picture Co., Dept. B. C., 173 N. Green St., Chicago.

FOR LADIES

EGYPTIAN Cream Will Make You Radiantly beautiful. Gives you a perfect complexion and rids your skin of every blemish. Absolutely pure. Recommended by physicians, skin specialists and stage beauties. Write today for free particulars and expensive free souvenir. The Robertson Co., 558 West 158th St., New York City.

EMBROIDERY Catalogue C. Package Embroidery needles, for five ladies names and dime. H. Patchett, Sta. B, Washington, D. C.

REAL ESTATE

VIRGINIA Fertile Farm Lands $15.00 Per acre and up. Easy payments. Send names of two friends interested in Virginia and receive our beautiful magazine one year free. F. H. LaBaume, Agr'L Agent, Norfolk & Western Ry. Bldg., Room 75, Roanoke, Va.

WONDERFUL Bargains in Rich, Productive orchard lands, located in Kootenay Valley, British Columbia. Improved land at low prices on easy terms. Write for free particulars. D. B. Dulmage, Morgan Park, Ill.

HEALTHY Homes, Easy Money. Write A. A. Post, Dept. B, Rogers, Ark.

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

WRITE Moving Picture Plays: $50.00 Each; all or spare time; experience or correspondence course unnecessary. Details free. Atlas Publishing Co., 344, Cincinnati, Ohio.

MUSICAL

SONGS—Poems, Don't Waste Your Money. Write for the best legitimate proposition ever offered song poems and music writers. J. E. Minnick Co., Inc., Publishers, 49H West 28th Street, New York City.

SONG Poems Wanted. Immediate Publication on Big Royalty if accepted. Send MSS. To-day. A hit means thousands. Free book. Len Fleming & Co., Dept. 302, 1416 Broadway, New York City.

BEGINNERS Can Play Piano or Organ Selections right off—first trial without teacher or $1,000 forfeit. Write Musician Selfmaker Co., Chicago.

SONG Poems. Sell For Cash or Have Published free. Manuscript Sales Co., 57 West 28th St., Department A, New York City.

HONEY FOR SALE

STRICTLY Choice, New Crop, Clover Honey; Thirty pound can $3.45; two or more cans $3.30 each. Sixty pound cans $6.30 each. Sample 10 cents which may be retained from first order. Price list free. M. V. Facey, Preston, Minn.

SONG POEMS

SONG Poems Wanted: I've Paid Writers thousands in royalties. Send me samples of your work for free criticism. If available, will publish under fairest, most liberal contract ever offered. Your success largely depends upon selecting an absolutely reliable, competent and successful publisher. New York is recognized market for songs and best place to publish. I composed and published many of the "greatest hits." Established 16 years, free booklet. John T. Hall, 3 Columbus Circle, New York.

OLD COINS WANTED

$1.00 to $1000.00 cash paid for all rare money to date. Many valuable coins in circulation. Get posted. Send stamp for large illustrated coin circular. It may mean much profit to you. You have nothing to lose. Send now. Numismatic Bank, Dept. 12, Fort Worth, Texas.

FORMULAS

GOLDOMETER for Locating Gold and Silver ore, lost and buried treasures, etc. Circular for stamp. Wilson's World, Chicago.

MISCELLANEOUS

READ "SHE," 25c. Four Nifty Photos, 10c. Catalogue, 2c. Paul Duff, 2713 Mozart, Chicago.

9 CONCEALED Beauties, Imported, Rare; and 5 positions, active life, 15c. Wra, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

PETS (squirrels) 2 Exquisite Calendars, water-color reproductions (dime). Puzzle Co., Norwalk, Conn.

PERSONAL

VIRGIN Snow Is Not Whiter Than Your Complexion will be after you have used Peachbloom, the matchless skin bleach and skin food preparation. If your skin is discolored from sunburn, tan, blotches or other causes, write at once for full free particulars and special offer now being made to—Madame La Fonda, Suite 16, Washington, D. C.

MARRY Rich—Matrimonial Paper of Highest character, containing hundreds of photos and descriptions of marriageable people with means; mailed free, sealed; either sex. Write. One may be your ideal. Standard Cor. Club, Box 607, Grays Lake, Illinois.

MARRY—Many Rich, Congenial and Anxious for companions. Interesting. Particulars and photos free. The Messenger, Jacksonville, Fla.

THROUGH Arkansaw by Footpower, by Jim Whighams, middle sized Gal and Palzy County Tom. It will turn your funny cup over. Yes, it tickles the ladies, too. 10c postpaid. The Midnight Press, Portland, Oregon.

MARRY Wealth and Beauty. Marriage Directory free. Pay when married. New plan. Ladies send description in first letter. Box 314 M. Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY, Descriptions, Names and Addresses of 50 Ladies 50 cents. Descriptions free. Southwestern Exchange, Odell, Texas.

MARRY Marriage Directory With Photos and descriptions free; pay when married; new system. Box 525, R, Kansas City, Mo.

LOVINE Never Fails. Every Package Guaranteed. Either sex, 10c. Two packages sealed 20c. Union, Box 100 N, Palatine, Ill.

FUTURE Told. Also Past. Send 10c and birthdate. J. D. Edwards, 2703 Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

MARRIAGE Paper Free; Best Published for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

MARRIAGE Paper, Largest Published. With photos pretty girls, mailed free. Ideals, St. Paul, Minn.

MARRY—Photos, Descriptions and P. O. Addresses of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry, free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

MARRY Rich. Hundreds Anxious to Marry. Descriptions and photos free. The Unity, Sta. D, Grand Rapids, Mich.

HUNDREDS Wealthy Members Seeking Early marriage. Description free. Mrs. Wrubel, 1420 West Oakland, Calif.

GET Married—Best Matrimonial Paper Published. Mailed free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRY—Catalogue With Photos and Descriptions free. Pay if suited. Select Club, Dept. 674, Tekonsha, Mich.

A Wrong Conclusion.

As a man entered a picture gallery the attendant tapped him on the shoulder and, pointing to a small cur that followed him, said:

"Dogs are not admitted."

"That's not my dog," replied the visitor.

"But he follows you."

"So do you!" replied the old gentleman, sharply.

The attendant growled, and removed the dog with entirely unnecessary violence.

Free Asthma and Hay Fever Cure.

D. J. Lane, a chemist at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for asthma and hay fever, in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to any one who will write him for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

Knew the Zones.

Teacher—"How many zones has the earth, Johnny?"

Johnny—"Five."

Teacher—"Correct. Name them."

Johnny—"Temperate, intemperate, canal, horrid, and ozone."

Excellent.

"Is she a good musician?"

"Very. She knows when to quit."

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are daily using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

I Want Every Woman to Know

that she can open a charge account with my house. And I want to tell you that I have just moved our entire great establishment of women's Wearing Apparel into our spacious, new, all-daylight building.

I Want 500,000 More Women to Join

my present half-million customers who are now buying their clothes on my National Open Charge Account Plan—with six months in which to pay. My binding Moneyback Guarantee and Free Examination privilege protects you on every article you buy.

I Will Fill Your Order From This Great Style Book If It Is Only 25c Worth.

I will gladly send you any article shown in my exclusive Style Catalog even if the price is only 25c, just to show you my wonderful values. This is the most liberal offer that could possibly be made by any house. Send for my new Fall and Winter Style Book today,—or, better still, send your trial order on my binding money-back guarantee for this complete Fall Outfit.

$4.95 Only $1.00 Down

Complete Outfit For Fall

Only One Dollar down, balance 80 cents a month. This elegant tailored dress skirt of newest Pinhead Check Mixture effect. Colors: Brown Mixture or Grey Mixture. Mannish waist of smart Black and White Striped flannel goods. Correct weight for all wear. And new figure-fitting Petticoat of Bernadine—a good quality cotton fabric resembling silk. Black only. Ladies' and Misses' sizes. Skirt lengths, 36 to 44 inch. Waist, 22 to 30 inch. Bust, 32 to 44 inch. All three garments complete—$4.95.

Six Months to Pay

Remember, if this outfit doesn't please you beyond words, we will take it back and refund every cent paid. We give you Free Delivery to your door, no matter where you live. You don't pay one cent for express.

I have made this a great anniversary season in honor of the completion of our new building. Every customer will be astounded at the splendid array of bargains.

Don't delay a moment. Send today for my Big Book of Women's and Children's Made-to-Measure Suits, Cloaks, Dresses, Skirts, Waists, Petticoats, Dress and Street Hats, Shoes, Hosiery, Undermuslins, Gloves, Furs, Fur Coats, Hair Goods, etc. Also be sure to ask for our new catalog of Men's Wear with special offer to the men and boys.

I open a charge account with every reliable family giving the lowest prices to all and six months to pay. Write me today. BERNARD MAYER, Pres.

Bernard Mayer Co., 3907 Gage Street, Chicago, Ill.

10 DAYS FREE TRIAL

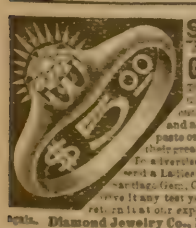
We ship on approval without a cent deposit, freight prepaid. DON'T PAY A CENT if you are not satisfied after using the bicycle 10 days.

DO NOT BUY *a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price* until you receive our latest art catalogs illustrating every kind of bicycle, and have learned our *unheard of prices* and *marvelous new 1913 offers.*

ONE CENT to all it will cost you to write a postal and everything will be sent you free postpaid by return mail. You will get much valuable information. Do not wait, write it now

TIRES, Coaster-Brake rear wheels, lamps, sundries at *half usual prices.*

Mead Cycle Co. Dept L-53 **Chicago**



SANTIACO GEMS

Look like and have exciting brilliancy of

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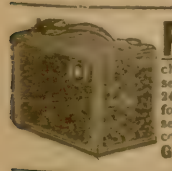

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Among the "Movies"

Or, ROY MANLY'S SEARCH

By Weldon J. Cobb

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Begun in No. 34, August 23. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IX.

A KINDLY DEED.

"W'VE got to burn down a house," said Barnes, manager of the movies. "Can't you find me some old shack we can buy for a song, Manly?"

"I'll try, Mr. Barnes," piped Roy, cheerily. "Are we going to take that Indian film this week!"

"Soon as we get through here, the 'bad lands' and the Indian reservation come next on the program, yes."

It was a new Roy who hustled about, energetic and happy. A week had passed by since he had become an "actor," one of the movies. It took a forlorn, friendless, persecuted lad like Roy to appreciate the contrast of good cheer, kindly smiles, the considerate sympathy and even affection of people who were right. A careless, jolly group with true Bohemian instincts, the movies group represented persons full of kindly spirit, generous, helpful, and lighthearted.

From the driver, Jake, and the four men actors down to Mrs. Barnes and her sister-in-law, the young girl, Luella Bryce, our hero won all hearts. Life for him now began with the simple joy of living in the morning, and ended in lively conversation amid congenial company in the evening.

After a talk with Mr. Tyson, the movies manager had offered to employ Roy for the rest of the season at ten dollars a week and his keep. It looked like a royal fortune to Roy, and he felt as if had reached the very acme of boyish ambition.

The airman had departed after acting with his biplane in several new exhibition stunts. Then Barnes continued to work out his program. The wild scenery of the place formed a setting to a score or more of motion picture dramas. There was a coach holdup, mining camp tragedies, cowboy comedies; in fact, nearly every striking phase of wild Western life was depicted for the camera.

Roy was station agent, farmer, outlaw, lover, villain—the movies wardrobe furnishing any make-up desired. In some of the scenes, however, he appeared in his natural character—a boy. He was a fine swimmer and of great use to Barnes in scenes where daring water stunts and rescues were features.

A week of perfect bliss for the runaway rover had passed, and now Roy was more enthusiastically than ever steeped in the bewitching attractions of the moving picture business. The weather had been superb, Barnes had been signally successful in his films, and when Roy was told of the program ahead of them he felt that he had reached the highest ambition of his life.

"When we get all our wildwood scenarios out, then some Indian specialties, and then a jump to Mexico. It's Alaska next winter, I understand."

"Brr-rr-rr! None of that for me," shivered Montague, who took the light and dainty walking gentleman parts in the pictures.

"You'll see some life if you stay with us, Manly," declared Barnes, "and you'll stay, if I have my say."

Roy figured out that he would wind up his present engagement with several hundred dollars. That would be great capital to start a sympathetic hunt for Mr. Morton. Meantime, the airman might be casually looking for the same much-needed individual. Roy felt that he was not wasting any time, but laying a sound and sure foundation for his future work.

This especial morning he had been sent by Jake, the cook, to secure some butter from a little settlement a few miles inland from the camp. The roads were poor, so Roy decided to tramp it, instead of taking the automobile. He had never been to the little village before, but he found it readily enough, and was returning to camp, when he sat down under a hedge at the outskirts of the settlements to rest for a few minutes.

Voices on the other side of the hedge attracted his attention. Roy peered through the shrubbery. A very old man was facing a person who held a legal-looking document in his hand.

"It's too bad," the old man was saying, in a tone of deep distress. "I've lived here, man and child, for fifty years, and now everything is to be taken away from me, and I shall become homeless. It will kill my poor old wife, sheriff!"

"I am very sorry," answered the other man, "but duty is duty, you know. You see, the court has decided that you are a squatter, and has vested the legal ownership of the land on which your house stands in Mr. Smith. He wants to use the land, and says you must move your house inside of ten days, or he will have to evict you and tear it down."

"But where can I move it—I own no land," spoke the old man mournfully. "Besides, as you see, the old shack wouldn't stand moving. A farmer has offered me ten dollars to tear it down and use the old boards to build sheds on his own place, but what good is that amount to me? My son who lives in the East has offered us a home, but it would take fifty dollars railroad fare alone to reach him."

"Well, I've notified you," said the sheriff. "You must make some arrangement within the ten days."

"It's hopeless and it will kill my poor old wife!" groaned the old man, as the officer went away.

Roy glanced at the building that was the central point of interest in the incident of the moment. It was indeed a shack, but had once been quite a pretentious dwelling. It was two stories in height and roomy, with large verandas. A great thought came into his mind. His boyish heart was filled with pity for the old man in distress.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, leaping the hedge nimbly and approaching the old man, who was wiping the tears from his eyes, "but I overheard the sheriff talking with you just now."

"Then you heard my doom pronounced and that of my wife," responded the old man, dejectedly.

"It was about the old house yonder. If you could sell it for a hundred dollars, I suppose it would help you out?"

"A hundred dollars! Why, if I had fifty I could get to my son in the East."

"I think I can find a purchaser," said Roy.

"You do!"

"Yes, and I can let you know in an hour."

"Oh, this is blessed news!" cried the old man, joyously.

Roy sped away on his errand of mercy. He reached the camp and informed Barnes that he had located a house for sale cheap. The manager was eager to see it, and they were soon at the old building.

"Why, it is ideal for our purposes," declared Barnes. "'The Deserted Homestead; or, Back to The Old Home,' and we'll have a realistic fire when we act out 'The Firebug's Revenge.' I wonder what we can get it for? I am allowed liberal funds for accessories, but if I could reach it for—well—one hundred and fifty."

"I think you can," said Roy. "You might buy it cheaper, even, but the poor old couple who own it need every dollar they can get."

The old man broke down when the new crisp bank bills were placed in his hands. He tried to make Roy take a commission for his services, but the joy of doing a good deed was all the reward Roy wanted.

Some great acts were brought out with the old house as a basis for the scene. Then, two days later, the old ruin went up in smoke, after serving for the framework of the lurid plots of a firebug.

Roy was going to the camp that evening when he heard shouts in the distance. Rather they were yells, and he ran to the edge of a ravine, the source of the commotion, to learn what the outcry might mean.

Two men working on a farm near by had preceded him. He joined them in watching six freshly painted Indians riding through the valley. They were waving their weapons and singing some wild war song. One of the men spoke to his companion.

"That's bad, neighbor."

"Going to their yearly powwow?"

It looks so. There will be the big war dance, and, judging from the rows between the two crowds that meet there, I wouldn't be surprised if they had a lively scrimmage."

"Here's a chance for some lively new films, then," ruminated Roy at once, and he darted for the camp to advise the manager of the movies of his discovery.

CHAPTER X.

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET.

"MONEY, my friend."

"Ugh!"

"Heaps of money."

"Wagh!"

It was Barnes, the manager of the movies, who made the observations, and a typical Indian chief who grunted out the comments upon the same. Roy Manly was an interested witness of the novel interview.

Just as soon as Roy had informed Barnes of the great war dance, the latter was eager to get on the move. He had planned pictures with Indians in them, but to happen upon the dusky savages in the midst of their grand annual powwow was luck indeed.

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feature of the year," declared Barnes.

There was a great packing up, and the automobiles started for the Indian Reservation, forty miles distant. The party had no right to trespass upon the reservation without permission from a chief of the tribes who lived there, so Barnes took Roy with him, and by sending an Indian runner to one of the chiefs with a present of a few dollars, he had secured the interview now in progress.

It took five ten-dollar bills to gain the consent of the trafficking chief to allow the movies free scope on the reservation. The automobiles were run to a spot near the principal camp of the tribe, and Barnes got his camera outfit in order for a set of "true to life" films.

Roy never forgot the hour they spent in photographing the wild antics of the savages in their great war dance. He saw dusky warriors whirl and gyrate till they fell down exhausted. He witnessed a weird revel whirl, six men on a side, a fight occurred with knives bound with cloth all except the point, with which the contestants freely jabbed each other.

It was a sanguinary realistic scene. The next morning they took some athletic views. Then more money induced the savages to act in a drama where the movies took the principal parts. Barnes was highly satisfied with results.

"I say, Manly," he declared, with unction, "we have had nothing but good luck ever since you joined us."

"I'm glad of that," responded Roy.

"It's true. That airship stunt was magnificent. You got us that house to burn up, and steered us against this Indian jamboree. I tell you, the people who hire me will be delighted at all these splendid novelties."

They were getting ready to start away from the reservation in the automobile, their mission accomplished, when a bright-eyed lad about Roy's own age ran up to them animatedly.

"Show you!" he cried. "Show you for fif' cent."

"Show what?" inquired Barnes.

"All new, all fine," declared the Indian youth. "Make great picture. Run gauntlet!"

"All right; here you are," and Barnes handed out a silver half-dollar.

"Come quick—bring machine to make picture. Fine! fine!" enthused the youth, and between them Barnes and Roy carried the camera and its equipment forward.

"I should say so!" fairly cried Barnes, as they came to an open space. "Quick, help me get the machine in order, Manly—we mustn't miss this famous scene."

Whirr-rr-rr—the camera was promptly set and going. Roy stared in wonder at a novel scene, indeed. Then with a sharp cry he sprang forward.

Nearly fifty Indian youths faced one another, ranged in opposite lines about four feet apart. Each one of them was armed with a whip of green rawhide. A white boy bared to the waist was running this gauntlet. He was screaming and shrieking. He tried to break through the lines.

Whack! whack! whack! It made Roy shudder as the flying lashes crossed the now striped and bleeding back of the unfortunate youth.

"Stop them, Mr. Barnes!" he shouted, dashing forward.

Before the motion picture man could act, however, or Roy reach the leader of the group, the white boy had run the gauntlet. He cleared the line, shrieking in mad terror and pain, dashed through some bushes, and flung himself prostrate on the muddy bank of a pool of water. One of the Indian youths followed him far enough to fling his clothing after him with a contemptuous expression of face.

"How dare you!" cried the indignant Roy, facing this youth. "I shall see that this is reported to the Indian agent."

"Ugh!" retorted the young brave, "agent friend. He no find fault, for white boy thief."

"What did he steal?"

"Little squaw's beads. So we treat thieves. Agent say very good."

Roy felt sorry for the sufferer, although he did not doubt that the Indian lad told the truth. The savages would scarcely dare assail a white boy without cause.

Roy found the victim of the gauntlet still lying on the ground, twisting and groaning. He went up to him.

"See here, my friend, you are in a pret-

It was a sight to see.

ty bad fix, and you had better get away from here before those young braves think of some new mischief," suggested Roy.

"Oh, I can't move! I can't move!" moaned the lad.

"You wait here, and I'll try and fix you up," said Roy.

He went to the big automobile and stated the case to Jake. The big-hearted chauffeur carried a full supply of salves, liniments and linen for exigency use. Roy went back to the swimming hole. He had brought some towels with him, and he first washed off the bleeding back of the victim. Then he applied the salve to the wounds and liniment to the bruises. He helped the boy put on his clothing. The latter was by this time considerably relieved from the frantic pain. He turned his face upon Roy to thank him. As he did so, he shrank away, and at this strange movement Roy made a discovery.

The lad exactly answered the description of the mysterious caller at the hotel at Springfield. He was freckle-faced and had squinty eyes. Further than that, the coat he wore in an instant reminded Roy of the boy who had stolen his clothes while he was bathing in the river the day he joined the movies.

A sudden revulsion of feeling came over Roy, but he did not show it openly. He had started to help a fellow being in trouble, and he would not be charitable halfway. The boy he had served hung his head as though he was ashamed of himself. He sat down on a big stone and did not look Roy in the eye.

"Have you any special place you want to get to?" inquired Roy.

"It doesn't matter much, I'm so beat up," was the dull and dispirited response. "I live at Springfield. If I could get to Dunbar, about ten miles from here, I could get a ride home."

"Our automobiles are going by way of Dunbar, I heard my employer say," remarked Roy. "I'll go and ask him if he has any objection to giving you a lift that far."

"Say, you're just awful good to a mean, low-down fellow like me," spoke the boy, in a broken tone, and he covered his face with his hands, and Roy could see the tears trickle through his fingers.

The lad was given a seat in the big automobile that carried the wardrobe and general equipment of the movies. When they reached Dunbar, he got out of the machine and beckoned to Roy. The latter approached him, feeling in his pocket for some change.

"Here's enough to give you a meal or two," spoke Roy, "and I hope you get home all right."

The other began to cry as he took the money.

"If I were you," proceeded Roy, "I would steer clear of a mix-up like that I found you in. It doesn't pay."

"Say!" burst forth the other overcome with emotion and tears, "I—I—do you know who I am."

"Why, hardly," responded Roy.

"I'm a relative of Lawyer Brownell of Centerville. I once worked in his office. I was on your track at the hotel at Springfield."

"I suspected that," Roy added quietly.

"Then later I tried to rob you when you were in swimming."

"Why?"

"I was after some papers wanted by a client of Brownell, your guardian, Reuben Foster. You see I know all about the case."

"Yes, I see that," nodded Roy.

"Now, after all the kindness you have shown me, I wouldn't do you harm for worlds. On the contrary, I am going to do you some good. I am going to cut away from that scheming relative of mine. Whisper!"

He leaned towards Roy and spoke five words. They were:

"Glen Morton is at Panama."

This thrilling story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

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"When I go to Heaven," said the bishop, "I'll ask Jonah."

"But supposing," the other persisted, "that he is not there."

"Then you will have to ask him," was the retort.

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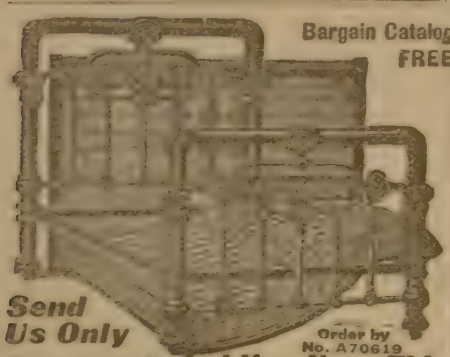
"No, grandma, I'm not going to school at all. I can't read, nor I can't write, nor I can't sing, and I'd like to know what good I'd be at school."



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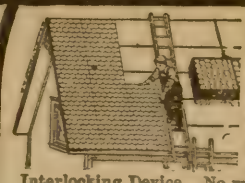

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Cleverly Settled.

The wisdom of Solomon prevails to some extent even among the judicial dignitaries of Russia. This is evident from the following ingenious device invented by one of them to discover on which side truth and justice lay in a rather difficult case that came before him recently.

In the university town of Dorpat, a prosaic, plodding farmer complained to a justice of the peace "that he had been defrauded by the defendant of twenty roubles," about fifteen dollars.

"I bought a cow from him—he is a peasant, your honor," he explained, "and I first paid for the animal, and then asked him to drive it from the marketplace into my yard. This he agreed to do.

"Well, the scoundrel—I beg your—his pardon, I mean. Well, when he had the cow close to my barn, he refused to budge a step farther unless I paid him twenty roubles, saying that he had received nothing from me. This was an inf—— I mean a barefaced lie, because I paid him the money a few minutes before."

"Where are your witnesses?" asked the judge.

"Witnesses! I have not a single witness. What are the witnesses for? Doesn't he know right well, the contemptible cur of a dog, that I paid him the——"

"You must not call him names," interposed the judge.

"Did he pay you the money?" asked the judge of the defendant.

"I never saw the color of it, your honor. Why, if he had paid me, do you think——"

"That will do," exclaimed the judge; "the plaintiff's claim, unsupported by witnesses or evidence of any kind, is null and void. He seems an honest fellow, though, and has evidently lost his twenty roubles. Let's make up a little subscription for him. I will head the list with five roubles. Won't you give something, too?" inquired the judge of the defendant, who had won the suit.

"That I will," eagerly exclaimed the triumphant suitor, "with a whole heart. Will three roubles do? Here's the note."

The judge took the three-rouble note, examined it critically, looked suspiciously at the donator, and said:

"You dare to utter false money in an imperial court of justice! Have you any more notes of this description? This is a very serious matter indeed. Where did you get this forged money?"

The man turned red and white and yellow, gave a series of explanations that contradicted each other, muttered and floundered about from lie to lie, till at last, in despair, he cried out:

"If you want to know the whole truth, here it is: This forged note belongs to the plaintiff. He did pay me twenty roubles for the cow, the rascal, but he paid me in forged notes, and that's one of them. It all amounts to just what I said, that he didn't pay me at all, and it's he that must go to Siberia for uttering forged notes, not I. I am as innocent as the babe unborn."

The dishonest defendant, by his own confession, had admitted himself a perjurer, and he was astounded to learn that the notes he had received were as good as the best that came into the empire of the Czar. He had been cleverly tricked by the wise judge.

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ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Behind the Times.

"Oh, Mrs. Hubb!" exclaimed Mrs. Goodthing to the young Boston matron. "I remembered it was little Wadsworth's birthday, so brought him one of those old-fashioned children's banks, the kind we used to drop the coins down the chimney of a little red tin house, with green blinds painted on it, you remember?"

"So very kind of you," replied Mrs. Hubb, frigidly. "You will find Wadsworth in his toy office, playing with his new cash register."

Mrs. Nuwed—"Have you any egg plant today?"

Grocer—"None today, lady."

Mrs. Nuwed—"How can that be? I just saw the eggs in the window, myself."

No Rehearsal.

A funeral procession was moving slowly along the village street, when old Mickey O'Hea stepped out of his house. He had not heard of the funeral, and so was curious to know.

"Good mornin'," he said to a neighbor; "who is it they be buryin' today?"

"Ah, sure," replied the neighbor, "who but poor ould Dinny O'Callaghan."

"Ould Dinny O'Callaghan, is it? Phawt! is poor ould Dinny dead?"

"Well, now ye don't think they be rehearsin' wid him, do you?" snapped the neighbor.

Expected Too Much.

A Buffalo preacher tells a story of a woman who, hearing him preach, informed a friend that she did not like the services at all. The seat was hard, she said, the singing was not good, and the preaching was poor. Her little girl, who overheard her remarks and who was present with her at church, said:

"But, mamma, what can you expect for a penny?"

Good Business Woman.

The little daughter of a clergyman stubbed her toe and said "Darn!"

"I'll give you ten cents," said her father, "if you'll never say that word again."

A few days afterward she came to him and said:

"Papa, I've got a word worth half a dollar."

Did Not Follow.

One day an Irishman was seated in the waiting room of a station with an odorous pipe in his mouth. One of the attendants called his attention to the sign: "No smoking."

"Well," said Pat, "I'm not a-smokin'."

"But you have a pipe in your mouth!"

"Sure, an' I've shoes on me feet, but I'm not walkin'."

Sister's Intended—"Will you be sorry, Willie, when I marry your sister?"

Willie—"Yes, sir! I'll be sorry for you, 'tause I like you!"

Not Worried About Them.

After committing some minor domestic crime, the minister's small son escaped the wrath to come by hiding all day in the barn. As he could not be found all day, all feeling other than alarm on his parents' part disappeared. In the evening the young fugitive returned.

Presently, taking him on his knees, the minister gravely said:

"It is true my son, that I could not find you, but the Lord and the Evil One knew where you were."

"Oh, well, I wasn't worrying about that," replied the unrepentant youngster; "they weren't looking for me with shingles in their hands."

A Matter of Direction.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., told at Louis Tiffany's Egyptian fete in New York a story that conveys a lesson. The story was elicited by an account of the daily life of the modern young man who dissipates.

"But where do all these things lead?" Mr. Rockefeller said. I know a sagacious man of affairs whose daughter came to him one night and said:

"'Father, dear, would you object to my marrying a fast young man?'

"'Not if he's going in the right direction,' was the father's wise reply."

Exchange of Courtesies.

A man left his umbrella in a stand at a hotel recently, with a card attached bearing this inscription:

"This umbrella belongs to a man who can deal a blow of 250 pounds weight. I shall be back in five minutes."

When he returned to claim his property he found in its place a card bearing the following inscription:

"This card was left here by a man who can run twelve miles an hour. I shall not come back."

Elizabeth's Age.

The class in English history was in session, and the professor was telling of the impressionable age at the time of the Elizabethan era. After speaking for some minutes on the subject he turned to one of the young men and asked:

"How old was Elizabeth, Mr. Holmes?"

The young man wore a far-away expression.

"Eighteen on her last birthday, sir."

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THE HUNGRY GOAT.

There once was a bad billy goat
That ate up his young master's coat,
And then looked the place o'er
To find something more
To pass down his funny red throat.

THE LOVE OF LIFE.

Long ago there lived in Japan a man called Sentaro, which means "millionaire," but he was not quite so rich as that. He had inherited a small fortune from his father and he passed his time carelessly. One day, without any reason whatsoever, the thought of death and sickness came to him. The idea of falling ill or dying made him wretched.

"I should like to live," he said to himself, "till I am 500 or 600 years old, at least, free from all sickness."

He wondered whether it were possible, by living simply and frugally, to prolong his life as long as he wished.

Sentaro had often heard the tale of the Chinese Emperor named Shin-no-Shiko. He was one of the most able and powerful rulers in Chinese history. The books said that he had built all the large palaces and also the famous great wall of China. He had everything in the world he could wish for, but in spite of all his happiness and the luxury and splendor of his court he was miserable because he knew that one day he must die and leave it all. When Shin-no-Shiko went to bed at night, when he rose in the morning, as he went through his day, the thought of death was always with him.

The Emperor at last called a meeting of his courtiers and asked them all if they could not find for him the "elixir of life," of which he had often heard. One old courtier, Jofuku by name, said that far away across the seas there was a country called Horaizan, and that certain hermits lived there who possessed the secret of the "elixir of life." Whoever drank of this wonderful draft lived forever. The Emperor ordered Jofuku find the hermits and bring him back to set out for the land of Horaizan to a phial of the magic elixir. Jofuku sailed for the land of Horaizan, but he never returned to the waiting Empéror, but ever since that time Mount Fuji in Japan has been said to be the fabled Horaizan and the home of the hermits who had the secret of the elixir and Jofuku has been worshiped as their patron god.

Now Sentaro determined to set out at once to the shrine of Jofuku, who is worshiped as the patron god of the hermits in the south of Japan. He reached the shrine and prayed for seven days, entreating Jofuku to show him the way to a hermit who could give him what he wanted so much to find.

At midnight of the seventh day, the door of the innermost shrine flew open, and Jofuku appeared in a luminous cloud, called to Sentaro to come nearer and spoke thus:

"Your desire is selfish and cannot be easily granted. You think that you would like to become a hermit so as to find the elixir of life. Do you know how hard a hermit's life is? A hermit is allowed to eat only fruit and berries and the bark of pine trees. A hermit must cut himself off from the world so that his heart may become as pure as gold and free from every earthly desire. Gradually, after following these strict rules, the hermit ceases to feel hunger or cold or heat, and his body becomes so light that he can ride on a crane or a carp and can walk on water without getting his feet wet. You, Sentaro, are fond of good living and of every comfort. You are exceptionally idle. In answer to your prayer, however, I will help you in another way. I will send you to the country of perpetual life, where death never comes—where the people live forever!"

Saying this, Jofuku put into Sentaro's hand a little crane made of paper, telling him that he should sit on its back and that it would carry him whither he was bound. Sentaro obeyed, wonderingly. The crane grew so large that he could ride on it with comfort. It then spread its wings, rose high in the air and flew away over the mountains and out to sea. After several days they reached an island. The crane flew some distance inland and then alighted. As soon as Sentaro got down from the bird's back the crane folded up of its own accord and flew into his pocket.

Now Sentaro began to look about him wonderingly, eager to see what the country of perpetual life was like. He walked first around about the country and then through the town. Everything was quite strange and different from his own land, but both the land and the people seemed prosperous, and so he decided it would be good for him to stay there. Within the memory of all the islanders no man had ever died there, and sickness was a thing unknown. Priests had come over from India and China and told them of a beautiful country called Paradise, where happiness and bliss and contentment fill all men's hearts but its gates could only be reached by dying. This tradition had been handed down for ages, from generation to generation—but none knew exactly what death was except that it led to Paradise. Quite unlike Sentaro and other ordinary persons, instead of having a great dread of death, they all, both rich and poor, longed for it as something good and desirable. They longed to go to the happy land of contentment called Paradise.

All this Sentaro found out by talking to the islanders.

The wealthy would have given all their money and all their goods if they could only shorten their lives to 200 or 300 years even. Without any change, to live on forever, seemed to these people wearisome and sad.

Sentaro was delighted. He said to himself that he would never grow tired of living and that he considered it wicked to wish for death. He was the only happy man on the island. For his part, he wished to live thousands of years and to enjoy life. He set himself up in business and for the present did not even dream of going back to his native land.

As years went by, however, things did not go so smoothly as at first. He had heavy losses in business and several times some affairs went wrong with his neighbors. This caused him great annoyance. Time passed like the flight of an arrow for him, for he was busy from morning till night. Three hundred years went by in this monotonous way and then, at last, he began to grow tired of life in this country and he longed to see his own land and his old home.

Sentaro, in his wish to escape from the country of perpetual life, recollected Jofuku, who had helped him before when he had been wishing to escape death, and he prayed to the saint to bring him back to his own land again. No sooner did he pray than the paper crane popped out of his pocket. Sentaro was amazed to see that it had remained undamaged after all these years. Once more the bird grew and grew till it was large enough for him to mount it. As he did so the bird spread its wings and flew swiftly out across the sea in the direction of Japan.

Such was the wilfulness of the man's nature that he looked back and regretted all he had left behind. He tried to stop the bird in vain. The crane held on it way for thousands of miles across the ocean. Then a storm came on and the wonderful paper crane grew damp, crumpled up and fell into the sea. Sentaro fell with it. Terrified at his danger, he cried out loudly to Jofuku to save him. He looked around and there was no ship in sight. He swallowed a quantity of sea water, which only increased his miserable plight. While he was thus struggling to keep himself afloat he saw a monstrous shark swimming toward him. As it came nearer it opened its huge mouth to devour him. Sentaro was all but paralyzed with fear, now that he felt his end so near, and he screamed out as loudly as ever he could to Jofuku to come and rescue him.

Behold! Sentaro was awakened by his own screams to find that during his long prayer he had fallen asleep before the shrine and that all his extraordinary and frightful adventures had been only a wild dream. He was in a cold perspiration with fright and was utterly bewildered.

Suddenly a bright light came toward him and in the light stood a messenger, who said, "I am sent to you by Jofuku, who, in answer to your prayer, has permitted you in a dream to see the land of perpetual life. You grew weary of living there and begged to be allowed to return to your native land so that you might die. Jofuku, that he might try you, allowed you to drop into the sea and then sent a shark to swallow you up. Your desire for death was not real, for even at that moment you cried out loudly and shouted for help.

"It is also vain in you to wish to become a hermit or to find the elixir of life. These things are not for such as you—your life is not austere. It is best for you to go back to your paternal home and to live a good and industrious life. Thus will you live to a good old age and be happy. Give up the vain desire to escape death, for no man can do that. By this time you have surely learned that even when selfish desires are granted they do not bring happiness."

Then the bright messenger disappeared.

Sentaro took the lesson to heart. He returned to his old home, gave up his old vain wishes and tried to live a good and useful life and to observe the lessons taught him, and he and his house prospered thenceforth.

Tot Wit.

One day little Lola heard the clock chiming the hour. "Oh, mamma," she exclaimed, "there's another hour ringing to get in!"

—

Willie's father was a candidate for office. One day Willie ran into the house and exclaimed: "Oh, mamma! Mr. Smith says papa's got the nomination. Is that worse than the measles?"

—

One little girl was telling her mother how another little girl was dressed at a party: "And would you believe it, mamma," she concluded, "her slippers were so tight I could see all the knuckles on her toes."

—

Three little fellows carrying skates were stopped by the minister one Sabbath morning. "Boys," he asked, "do you know where bad boys go who skate on Sunday?"

"Yes, sir," replied one, "they go over to the pond back of the cemetery."

—

Willie's mother had been telling his father about the little boy's misbehavior during the day.

"Mamma," said Willie, "you have the baddest memory I ever saw."

"Why do you think so?" she asked.

"'Cause," was the reply, "you always remember the bad things I do."

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Keeneyes, The Detective

(Continued from page seventeen.)

CHAPTER XXXV.

PODDS AGAIN.

THE next morning, Keeneyes, still disguised as Buck Green, the Bird City farmer, arrived in Kansas City, and went to the hotel to which he had been directed by Grensin Moore. At this hotel was stopping Moore's bride, and here Grensin Moore had joined her. Here, also, was Podds, whom Moore had employed as his valet, and Podds it was whom Keeneyes had come to see.

It was easy enough to learn which of the men-servants staying at the hotel was the valet of Grensin Moore; and, although Podds now went by another name, and looked very different from the Podds who had ridden in the automobile with Keeneyes, the fact that he was Moore's valet placed him beyond doubt as the man he sought.

Accordingly, having waited till the valet was released from his duties and had started forth afoot to admire the Passeo, Keeneyes, having followed him for some distance, overtook him near the fountain.

"Excuse me," said Keeneyes.

The valet turned with a start at sound of that voice, and perceived the man he supposed to be Buck Green. At any rate, he knew it to be the man who had been imprisoned in the cellar by himself and Grensin Moore. Apparently Grensin Moore had told him nothing of Keeneyes' visit, for he expressed surprise and disconcerted alarm at the address; doubtless he hoped to escape recognition.

"My dear Podds," said Keeneyes, genially, "accept the compliments of this bright, cheery morning from one who was once your fellow passenger."

"I don't know what you mean. My name isn't Podds——"

"So it isn't. By the way, what is your name?"

Podds turned his back on the detective and looked about for a passing taxicab.

"My dear Podds," the detective remonstrated, "it is entirely useless for you to try to escape from me. And after all, I mean you no harm."

"Harm!" cried the valet, looking sneeringly at the preposterously green-looking farmer. "That's a good one. You leave me alone, or I'll call a policeman."

"I shouldn't think you and the police on such intimate terms of friendship as all that," answered Keeneyes, calmly. "Do be reasonable. Look here, Podds, I have set myself to find out all I can about that mystery of the night you and Grensin Moore marched me at the muzzle of the revolver to what you supposed would be my watery grave. And I mean to find out all about it from you."

"Don't know what you're talking about," retorted the other, starting briskly away.

"I'm talking about George Wendell Pendleton, Fred Pinney, Wallyker, and yourself."

"I shall certainly demand protection from the police if you follow me another step!" cried Podds, fiercely.

"Protection from what? I'm not going to hurt you."

"Protection from your insolence."

"Well, call a policeman, do."

The valet hesitated.

"Or let me call one for you," Keeneyes suggested hospitably.

"Look here—what do you want with me?"

"I want you to answer some questions."

"Now, Mr. Buck Green, of Bird City, I'm going to put this matter to you," said the valet, with a sudden change of manner. "I won't deny that I have been mixed up with evil companions. That's what has led to my straying in by and forbidden paths, evil companions, yes, sir. Well, I've cut all that out. I took the step to separate me from all such cattle. I deserted the old bunch, and went into service to Mr. Moore. I want to lead a respectable life."

"A worthy ambition," murmured the detective.

"Yes, it is. And if you are the wholesouled farmer you seem to be, you'll be glad for me to cut away from all my wickedness; if you're a gentleman, you're not going to be dragging up all the bad I ever did; if you're a man you'll help me to get away from that bunch."

"I do not want to involve you in the net you used to weave," said the detective, waving his hand. "All I want is information regarding that bunch."

"It's this way," Podds declared. "I've cut 'em all out; but I don't propose to betray them. They were good to me, and we stood together; and now that I want to lead a good life, I'm not going to turn a sneak-spy and blab on them. I put it that way to Mr. Moore before I went over to his side."

"But you were willing enough to drown all of us in that cellar!" the detective reminded him.

"As to that—of course, if it had so happened that you'd all been drowned I should have felt freer and relieved of certain dangers. Turning on that water hadn't been my idea, and so I wasn't responsible for what might happen down in the cellar. As long as that bunch is alive I don't mean to betray their secrets; though if it had happened providentially that they could have been drowned, of course I can't deny it would have been in a way a comfort to my conscience."

"I see your point of view. Well, Podds, I have a point of view, also. My point of view is this: If you don't tell me all I ask of you—provided, of course that you know—I shall go to the police, and I shall reveal all that befell me that night, and your part in it."

"Well, sir, and suppose you do? What could you accuse me of? I rode with you in an automobile. I admit I went through the house by means of the roof—but I am now the valet of the man who owns that house. I admit I helped bring Miss Agnes Hallowell to Kansas City; but she is now the happy bride of Grensin Moore."

"And you will admit that you and Moore tried to drown me?"

"Of course not. Nor could you possibly prove such an absurdity. You see, Mr. Farmer, you can't prove anything against me."

Keeneyes leveled his finger at him impressively. "I can put you in the penitentiary for twenty years," he declared fixedly.

Podds turned pale. "What do you mean?" he stammered.

"I mean what I say. If you want to know any more, you will come with me. I am tired of following you."

The detective turned upon his heel and started away.

"But what do you accuse me of?" cried Podds, coming behind him.

"I won't discuss it on the street. If you care to go with me to my hotel, which you will admit is a respectable hostelry, I will say more to you."

Keeneyes walked on with head erect, his hands folded behind him, as if pacing off a furrow in one of his fields. Podds came dejectedly behind him, his gaze nearer earth, his hands slightly tremulous. In this manner they reached the detective's hotel, the same hotel in which lodged the original, the only Buck Green.

That morning, at an early hour, the detective had warned the farmer that he expected to bring thither a stranger at this time; and the farmer had been trained in a certain shrewd part he was to play.

Accordingly, when Keeneyes and Podds went up to the detective's suite of rooms and stopped in the parlor, the farmer, concealed in the bedroom, waited developments.

The conclusion of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

Humor of the Sick Room.

There are philosophical people who take physical misfortune in a matter-of-fact way. When a husband told his wife that he believed his rheumatism had wholly disappeared, she only remarked:

"Oh, I am so sorry! Now we shall never know when the weather is going to change."

There was the wife who was enjoined by the doctor to give her husband all the delicacies she could procure, as there was no prospect of his recovery.

"Then," explained the thrifty spouse, "what's the use of wasting dainty food on him if it won't cure him?"

One friend asked of another, who had been smashed up in a railway disaster and terribly injured, what he was going to do about it.

"Well," gasped the hopeful sufferer, "firstly, I shall go in for repairs; secondly, I shall go in for damages."

The proud, rich man who was injured by being run over exclaimed with warmth:

"It isn't the accident I mind; that isn't the thing; but the idea of being run over by a durned old swill cart! That's what makes me mad!"

There are the ambiguous people who can never give any exact information.

"How is your husband this afternoon, Mrs. Quiggs?"

"Why, the doctor says that if he lives until mornin' he shall have hopes of him; but if he doesn't he must give him up."

This is quite as bad as the Irishman who had been obliged to live with his master some time in Scotland. When he came back, his companion asked him how he liked Scotland.

"I will tell you now," said he, "I was sick all the time I was there, and if I had lived there until now, I should have been dead a year ago."

Crime and Its Penalty.

When Mrs. Wiffles recently meted out punishment to Master George Wiffles with a carpet-beater, that young gentleman gave vent to such weeping and wailing that the lady next door was constrained to poke her head over the back-yard fence and inquire what was the matter.

"Got about a couple o' hundred feet o' gas inside him—that's wot's the matter," Mrs. Wiffles replied.

"Couple o' hundred feet o' gas?" echoed the lady, somewhat incredulously. "Wot on earth's he been doing—takin' the gas pipe for a feedin' bottle?"

"No, he ain't," snapped Mrs. Wiffles. "He's been swallerin' the quarter wot I laid by for the gas meter."

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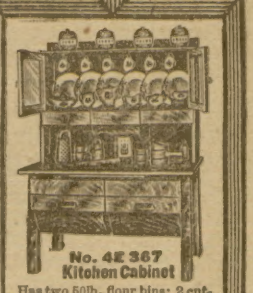

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